

The University of San Francisco

A CULTURALLY BASED ANALYSIS  
OF SELECTED IDIOMATIC  
EXPRESSIONS IN SYRIAN ARABIC

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education  
Multicultural Education Program

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

by

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May 1985

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## Dedication

To my parents Youssef and Zaida whose many sacrifices in the past made possible my success of today.

To Gufran, my beloved wife, who shared the struggle with me, for her patience, encouragement, inspiration and positive support throughout the process of preparation for and the writing of this study.

To my two young sons, Wisam and Basil, for their anxious suffering when I was too busy to entertain them and for their patience.

## Acknowledgement

In conducting this study the author has received valuable assistance and guidance from many generous, competent and erudite scholars.

Deep appreciation and gratitude is extended to my Dissertation Committee Chairperson, Dr. Alma Flor Ada, for guidance and scholarly ideas, her continuous help and availability and her dynamic and constructive criticism.

Sincere appreciation is also extended to the members of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Rosita Galang and Dr. Anita DeFrantz, for their valued direction and able assistance.

Many thanks are extended to Mr. Jawdat Yonan, Director of the School of Middle East Languages at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California; to Dr. John F. Brown, Chairperson of the Arabic Department; and Mrs. Despina White, my supervisor, for their initial guidance, and their encouragement, understanding, cooperation, and moral support while conducting my research.

I wish to thank Mr. Rueben Pearson of the Monterey County Office of Education for his constructive editing of the original proposal draft.

I also wish to thank all the participating members of the Arabic Department whose vital selections of the Arabic idiomatic expressions was appreciated.

My sincere thanks and gratitude to friends and colleagues goes to: Dr. Majid A. Asfoor for his worthy ideas, devotion, and constant encouragement and support; Dr. George El-Hage for his constructive directions and encouragements; and Dr. Nourredine Ale-Ali for his unique assistance in writing the fine Arabic script.

I am indebted to the staff of the Learning Resources Center, Defense Language Institute, for valuable assistance in identifying and obtaining sources of information from research libraries at distant locations.

Warmest appreciation is extended to Mrs. LaVerne Cooper of the Learning Resources Center for her devotion, patience, availability and constant support in finding information and typing all the drafts of the dissertation.

Finally, very warm appreciation and gratitude goes to Mr. Gary Walter, Chief of the Learning Resources Division, for editing, proof reading and final printing of this dissertation.

May, 1985  
San Francisco, California

Foazi Y. El-Barouki

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	THE RESEARCH PROBLEM . . . . .	1
	Introduction . . . . .	1
	Statement of the Problem . . . . .	3
	Background of the Problem . . . . .	4
	Purpose of the Study . . . . .	6
	Theoretical Rationale . . . . .	6
	Research Questions . . . . .	8
	Overview of the Methodology . . . . .	8
	Scope and Delimitations of the Study . . . . .	9
	Significance of the Study . . . . .	9
II	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	11
	Section One: Language and Culture . . . . .	11
	Section Two: Idioms in General, their nature and role in language acquisition . . . . .	21
	Section Three: The Arabic Language, especially its idioms . . . . .	33
	Section Four: Cultural Categories, as identified by other researchers . . . . .	39
III	THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY . . . . .	46
	Research Design . . . . .	46
	Informants . . . . .	47
	Instrumentation . . . . .	48
	Data Gathering . . . . .	53
	Data Analysis . . . . .	54
IV	ANALYSIS OF THE DATA . . . . .	56
	Analysis of Idioms within Cultural Categories . . . . .	62
	Category One: Social . . . . .	63
	Sub-category A: Situational . . . . .	63
	a. Social Interaction, Interpersonal Relations and Friendship . . . . .	63
	b. Marriage and Family Relations. . . . .	75
	c. Invocational . . . . .	80
	d. Food . . . . .	81
	e. Occupation . . . . .	87
	f. Time and Politics. . . . .	89
	Sub-category B: Personal Characteristics . . . . .	92
	a. Habitual Activity. . . . .	93
	b. Character Description of Feelings, Emotions and Reactions . . . . .	97
	Category Two: Religious . . . . .	109
	a. Predestination and Fatalism. . . . .	111
	b. Patience . . . . .	113
	c. Greeting . . . . .	114
	d. Compliments and Good Wishes. . . . .	115
	e. Sympathy . . . . .	119

V	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . .	123
	APPENDICES . . . . .	129
	Appendix A. . . . .	130
	Appendix B. . . . .	131
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	140

## LIST OF TABLES

Table One:	
Instructor's Idiom Production. . . . .	57
Table Two:	
Histogram of Idiom Frequency . . . . .	57
Table Three:	
Idioms and Number of Responses . . . . .	58

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1:	
Cultural Categories. . . . .	61

## CHAPTER I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Learning another language involves far more than simply learning the forms of the language, its significant sounds, its words, and the permissible sequences in which those sounds and words can occur. Full and effective communication in a second language presupposes not only the knowledge of how things are said in that language but also what is said.

Idioms and figures of speech in the second or foreign language present puzzles to the non-native student, resulting in a laborious exercise of solving them rather than being able to comprehend and enjoy the material for itself or for its ability to convey vicariously a particular experience.

An idiomatic expression is defined as:

a group of words that has a particular meaning because speakers of the language have agreed that it will have that meaning, not because the words taken separately add up to that agreed upon meaning.<sup>1</sup>

Iris Tiedt believes that someone who is learning English as a second language would have a hard time figuring out that "jumping out of my skin" means that one is

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<sup>1</sup>Iris M. Tiedt, Individualizing writing in the elementary classroom, (Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Documentation Reproduction Service, ED 113728, November, 1975.) p. 21.

frightened or "letting the cat out of the bag" means revealing a secret.<sup>2</sup>

The English language has been enriched by many idiomatic and figurative expressions. These expressions are the basis of understanding the language. They constitute the heart of the language, giving it color, feeling, charm and precision. This is also true of the Arabic language, in which idiomatic expressions are very important and are used in various daily situations.

Historically, Arabic foreign language classes have been largely concerned with teaching students to speak written Arabic without putting much emphasis on teaching spoken Arabic.<sup>3</sup> K. I. Semann, an Arabic linguist, believes that:

the teaching in universities of higher learning of spoken Arabic dialects has no more value as an academic subject than would the teaching of Kentucky Hills, or Brooklynese English, Bavarian German or Pathois French, etc.<sup>4</sup>

Leslie McLoughlin, an orientalist, takes the view that "a real understanding and appreciation of colloquial Arabic can only expand a student's knowledge of classical Arabic."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Leslie J. McLoughlin, Colloquial Arabic (Levantine), (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1982.)

<sup>4</sup>K. I. Semaan, "The Crisis of Arabic in the U.S.A.," The Muslim World 58 (1968): 334.

<sup>5</sup>McLoughlin, 1982, p. 3.



she believes that a student who understands all the allusions to proverbs and idiomatic phrases heard daily will be far beyond doctoral standards in terms of university studies.<sup>6</sup>

An appreciation of the Arabic language, which is vivid and so idiomatic, especially in everyday speech, means an appreciation of the Arabic culture. Teachers of classical and vernacular Arabic in the United States, however, have neither included nor emphasized this idiomatic issue in the language. The emphasis has been on speaking the language rather than understanding the cultural context.<sup>7</sup>

This study, therefore, will attempt to identify idiomatic expressions in Arabic that may be highly related to the Arabic culture, which must be recognized for an efficient teaching of Arabic as a second language.

#### Statement of the Problem

Which are the Arabic idioms that present difficulty to the speaker of English, according to Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California? What cultural information is needed to understand these idioms?

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 76.



### Background of the Problem

American learners of the Arabic language, and business people in particular, have suffered from the cultural problems that they face as they travel abroad in pursuit of their education or commercial goals. During their stay in the foreign country, they are faced with a number of idiomatic expressions.

Idioms originate from the historical or cultural experiences of a given society. Therefore, it is essential for individuals learning a second language to be aware of the traditions or experiences that have determined the speech patterns, in order to achieve complete communication.

Since it is not easy to determine when or how idioms were first used, they are, when first encountered, shocking and incomprehensible. Robert Di Pierto<sup>8</sup> argues that if you ask any second language learner, you will hear a "litany of deprecation about those nasty little expressions scattered throughout the textbooks that never mean what they seem to, or ought to, mean." Di Pierto believes that idioms become more critical in real life situations. He cites an example, saying:

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<sup>8</sup>Robert Di Pierto, ed., "Idioms, How We Love/Hate You," Interfaces: Linguistic and Psychoanalysis Newsletter, No. 6 (Dept. of Linguistics, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 1976). (ERIC Document ED 131721, 1976):3.

At the end of a hearty meal in a French home, one should be sure to say the right expressions with all the ease of a native speaker if further helpings of food are to be politely refused.<sup>9</sup>

The careful search for the right idiomatic expression goes beyond the transfer of information in the usage of language. Di Pierto also believes that, as human beings, we must have idiomatic ways of talking about life and death, or love and hate. These ways should go beyond the mere transfer of information. With the idioms Di Pierto emphasizes:

We find the way to talk about things that would otherwise be unexpressed in language. The horrors of war, the ultimate alienation of death and the great ecstasy of love would remain vague phenomena if we could not discuss them in terms of easily understood happenings in our daily life.<sup>10</sup>

After World War II, many foreign languages began to be taught in the United States, and Arabic was one of them. In the meantime, the need for trained American personnel in the Arab countries of the Middle East required the learning of Arabic as a second language, and the need for such training became acute. Thus, many linguists started to examine the Arabic culture to help those students acquire the second language.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

### Purpose of the Study

In this study, forty Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California, were given a questionnaire to identify those idioms in Arabic that offer difficulty to English-speaking learners of Arabic. Forty American students at the advanced level of the Arabic course presented at the Defense Language Institute were given a questionnaire to identify which of these idioms do not have a common English equivalent.

Arabic idioms that have no equivalency in English as identified by the students were then analyzed, and a set of cultural categories from which these items originated was determined. Cultural information needed to understand the idioms was offered.

### Theoretical Rationale

Language is an expression of culture. Idioms are expressions that are culturally based on history, religion, social customs and traditions, environment, professions and occupations. Idioms, therefore, are essential to the language.

Karen Watson<sup>11</sup> states that:

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<sup>11</sup>Karen Ann Watson, "Understanding Human Interaction: The Study of Everyday Life and Ordinary Talk." in Topics in Cultural Learning, 2 (East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1974): 57.

learning about another culture includes learning both the highest artistic and spiritual expressions of its people and their everyday patterns of thinking and doing.

It seems that this article is designed to teach members of one culture how to interact effectively with members of another culture through everyday patterns of thinking and doing, and that requires a fair knowledge of idioms in the other culture. In the same article, Watson suggests a concrete criterion for learning another culture, stating:

one measure of whether a person has learned another culture is whether his/her behavior is accepted as correct and appropriate by members of that society.<sup>12</sup>

Herbert Landar emphasizes that "learning a language means learning social conventions. Language having cognitive, expressive, and value aspects qualifies as an institution."<sup>13</sup> Landar believes that language and culture are very closely related, and that language is a part of culture. Therefore, idioms are expressions of both language and culture.

The relationship between language and culture is also emphasized by Nelson Brooks.<sup>14</sup> He states:

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>13</sup>Herbert Landar, Language and Culture (London: Oxford University Press., Inc., 1965), pp 5-6.

<sup>14</sup>Nelson Brooks, "The Analysis of Language and Familiar Culture," in The Cultural Revolution in Foreign Language Teaching, (National Textbook Co., Skokie, Ill., 1975), p. 19.

When a study of foreign language is amplified suitably with a culture dimension, it thus can contribute in a direct way to our perception of the culture in which we ourselves live.

Brooks refers to the need for a significant understanding and perception of the other culture through daily interactions in which the learning of idioms in that culture can take place.

### Research Questions

The questions that guided the inquiry are as follows:

1. Which are the Arabic idioms that present difficulty to speakers of English, as identified by 40 Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute?
2. Which are the Arabic idioms that have no equivalent idiom in English, as determined by 40 advanced Arabic students at the Defense Language Institute?
3. What are the cultural categories into which these idioms fall?
4. What is the cultural information needed to understand them?

### Overview of the Methodology

This study is a descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis contains four steps: Initially, the Arabic idioms which present difficulty to speakers of English were identified by means of a questionnaire completed by 40 instructors of Arabic in the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California. Secondly, English equivalency of these idioms was obtained by means of a questionnaire completed by 40 advanced students of the



Arabic language course at the Defense Language Institute to determine which of the Arabic idioms have no equivalents in English. In the third step of this study, the cultural categories of these idioms were identified, and in the fourth the cultural information needed to understand them was determined.

#### Scope and Delimitation

This study is limited to the idioms that have been identified by the 40 Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California.

#### Significance of the Study

An analysis of the idiomatic expressions in the Arabic language and a discussion related to language and culture should unquestionably be considered as falling within the sphere of bilingual, multicultural education. This study of Arabic idioms provides historical and cultural understanding that will enable people to understand the Arabic culture better.

Although the area of bilingualism and multicultural education has received considerable attention in recent years, many research problems and questions remain. One such question is related to the need for data concerning cultural and linguistic analysis of Arabic idioms. Much of the attention in previous research has been devoted to

structural comparisons, which included phonological problems of language, both in theoretical and applied linguistics. Studies of this sort have undoubtedly helped greatly in the preparation of needed materials for foreign language teaching as well as for sequential class activities and making students aware of the target language involved.

This study involves a selected number of Arabic idioms. It opens new vistas for the field of teaching Arabic as a second language and is available to teachers in this field to use when they prepare materials for teaching, especially in those areas where the use of idiomatic expression is emphasized.

The results of this study provide information that will benefit teachers of Arabic in practical teaching situations. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the methods and materials used in the process of teaching a second language.

Replications of this study could contribute to cover the area of Arabic idioms on which little has so far been done.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Books and articles related in content to the present study were reviewed to examine the relationship between language and culture. This review examined the following four areas:

1. Language and culture.
2. Idioms in general, their nature and role in language acquisition.
3. The Arabic language, especially its idioms.
4. Cultural categories as identified by other researchers.

#### Section One

##### LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Both Harry Hoijer<sup>15</sup> and Ben G. Blount<sup>16</sup> cite a paper written by Hoijer on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. Hoijer's paper is an attempt to clarify and interpret the Whorf hypothesis. He explains that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis appears to have had its initial formulation in the following two paragraphs taken from an article of Sapir,

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<sup>15</sup>Harry Hoijer, ed., Language In Culture, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967) pp. 92-105.

<sup>16</sup>Ben G. Blount, ed., Language, Culture and Society, A Book of Readings, (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop, 1974) pp. 120-140.



first published in 1929:

Language is a guide to 'social reality'. It powerfully conditions all our thinking about social problems and processes. Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society.... The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.<sup>17</sup>

Hoijer believes that the main idea of the hypothesis of Sapir-Whorf is that language is not simply a device for reporting experience but is very significant as well in defining experience for its speakers. Hoijer refers, in this respect, to Sapir as saying:

Language is not merely more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience which seems relevant to the individual, as is so often naively assumed, but is also a self-contained, creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience.<sup>18</sup>

Hoijer adds that Whorf develops the same thesis when he says:

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<sup>17</sup>David G. Mandelbaum, ed., Selected Writings of Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), p. 162.

<sup>18</sup>Edward Sapir, "Conceptual Categories in Primitive Languages", Science 74, (1931): 578.

the linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas but rather is itself the shape of ideas, the program and guide for the individual's mental activity, for his analysis of impressions, for his synthesis of his mental stock in trade.<sup>19</sup>

Hoijer argues in his paper that language plays a large and significant role in the totality of culture. Language is not only a technique of communication but it is a way of directing the perceptions of its speakers and providing them habitual modes of analyzing experience into significant categories. Each language, however, has its own peculiar and favorite devices, lexical and grammatical, which are employed in the reporting, analysis and categorizing of that experience, he says. It is evident, then, Hoijer concludes, the language according to the Sapir-Whorpe hypothesis includes both structural and semantic aspects. The structural aspect of language, which is that aspect most easily analyzed and described, includes its phonology, morphology and syntax. The semantic aspect consists of a self-contained system of meanings that are much more difficult to analyze and describe.

A thesis of this kind is extremely valuable. It resembles an interaction and a "constant relationship" between culture and linguistic structure. No doubt

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<sup>19</sup>Benjamin L. Whorf, Collected Papers on Metalinguistics, (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, Foreign Service Institute, 1952), p. 5.

language is considered part of culture. Language is the most flexible communication tool used by human beings. If we consider the impact of the semantic structure of a language on the life of a community, we see that this impact comes directly through verbal communication. Verbal behavior, as Whorf put it, "does not express ideas, but having ideas consists in the verbal behavior."<sup>20</sup>

Idioms are considered part of the semantic aspect of language that reflect people's habitual and favorite modes of reporting, analyzing, and categorizing experience.

The hypothesis of Sapir-Whorf is indeed an excellent reference for those interested in examining the "constant relationship" between language and culture, because it is directly related to the research undertaken. This research deals with the Arabic idiomatic expressions and the descriptive analysis of the cultural background of these idioms.

Paul Henle<sup>21</sup> points out that language has become an increasingly important field of study, and there is growing concern with it on the part of anthropologists, literary critics, philosophers, psychologists and sociologists. Therefore, it is appropriate that he should be associated with a collection of essays that directly deal with the

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Paul Henle, ed., Language, Thought and Culture, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958).

aspects of language and the relationship between language, thought and culture.

Henle first presents what Edward Sapir said about the conception of language:

The relation between language and experience is often misunderstood. Language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience which seem relevant to the individual, as is so often naively assumed, but is also a self-contained, creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely acquired without its help but actually defines experience for us by reason of its formal completeness and because of our unconscious projection of its implicit expectations into the field of experience.<sup>22</sup>

Second, in support of Sapir's hypothesis, Henle explains that Whorf has developed Sapir's claim, maintaining that a language constitutes a sort of logic, a general frame of reference, and so molds the thought of its habitual users. Whorf claims that where a culture and a language have developed together, there are significant relationships between the general aspects of the grammar and the characteristics of the culture taken as a whole. Henle also explains that in order for Whorf to substantiate his claim, he made a comparison of American Indian languages, notably Hopi, with European languages.

Henle then goes further to examine this thesis, beginning with a consideration of terms and then proceeding to discussions of the relation of language and culture. Here

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<sup>22</sup>Sapir, Loc. cit.



it becomes evident to Henle that this relationship is clear and that the connection between language and thought opens the way for a relationship between vocabulary and perception. In this respect, Henle says that "the vocabulary of language clearly reflects the physical and social environment of a people." He quotes Sapir to support this claim: "The complex vocabulary of a language would be a complex inventory of all the ideas, interests, and occupations that take up the attention of the community."<sup>23</sup>

The argument of Sapir-Whorf concerning this is that vocabulary reflects the environment of a people. Since the culture is largely dependent on this environment, then vocabulary and general ways of acting are affects of a common cause, and one may be an index to the other. Strong connections exist between this argument and the present study, since it deals with Arabic idioms that reflect the environment and with the cultural analysis and background of those idioms.

Dell Hymes<sup>24</sup> attempts to distinguish the relationship between language and culture, a language and a culture, and linguistics and anthropology. These corresponding terms are

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<sup>23</sup>Edward Sapir, "Language and Environment", American Anthropologist, n.s., 14 (1912): 228. Reprinted in Selected Writing of Edward Sapir, ed. by D. Mandelbaum (Berkeley, Calif., 1951), pp. 90-91.

<sup>24</sup>Dell Hymes, Language in Culture and Society: A Reader in Linguistics and Anthropology. (New York: Harper & Row, 1964.)

sometimes unjustifiably merged. Hymes believes that it is important to note how the relation between the terms of one of the preceding three distinctions may be conceived. He asks whether the relation of language to other aspects of culture is seen as that of evidence or instance. He also asks whether the relationship sought is in terms of correlation between the two, or in terms of linguistic phenomena as an index of something else.

Hymes points out that the question of the relation between language and culture often involves a complex of issues that may be summed up under the heading of striking a balance between language as "help" and as "hindrance". One may see language as a powerful and essential means of human communication, or as an artificial barrier to international understanding.

This book synthesizes the nature and goals of anthropology, showing that speech and language provide useful and crucial examples of general problems: how human beings differ, how they are alike, how cultures work and how they change.

Herbert Landar offers an introduction to major issues in contemporary linguistics as they relate to problems in anthropology, sociology, philosophy and psychology.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Herbert Landar. Language and Culture. (London: Oxford University Press, 1966.)

The book asks what relevance the careful study of language may have for the careful student of culture. It provides an answer that the author believes will be of interest to social scientists and humanists alike. Landar's answer is fairly technical and requires an interpretation of the history of the study of anthropology, particularly in America, from natural historical beginnings to present attempts to formalize, and make interesting discoveries about, the learned sign behavior that is called culture.

To answer the question of cultural relativism, the writer develops the theme that there are two kinds of cultural relativism. The baser sort has grown out of the baser part of post-Socratic teachings, the nobler out of the nobler part. He believes that:

the baser sort deals in primitive tribes, of primitive mentality, doomed by their primitive languages to primitive world-views. The nobler sort deals in the higher cultural contributions, the most humanistic ones, which are transcultural and not restricted by time, place, or the nature of philosophical language.<sup>26</sup>

Landar's work is considered by some the first systematic, comprehensive textbook ever written for a "Language and Culture" course. It deals with the nature and usage of language, the relation of reading and writing to the sociology of knowledge and the philosophy of language.

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. xiv.

The overall meaning of Wallace E. Lambert's work<sup>27</sup> can perhaps be grasped best in terms of his aspiration to help create a climate of human life in which people are no longer restricted and bound by barriers of language and culture. In particular, he has sought to bring the benefits of bilingual and bicultural life within easy reach of lay people, rather than letting them accrue exclusively to the privileged few.

Lambert maintains that language barriers are not difficult to circumvent and that bilingualism does not imply various types of handicaps, but rather offers assets and enrichments of all sorts; that a person can comfortably become bilingual and bicultural; that one's attitudes toward the group whose language is being learned play an important role in language acquisition and that such attitudes both affect and are affected by one's motivation to learn the other language.

Lambert believes that the study of language through an analysis of bilingualism is one of the most instructive ways of determining the cybernetic and neurophysiological functions of the human brain; that since styles of using language often engender social prejudice and unfair discrimination, safeguards against such discrimination must be built into educational, social and political systems, and

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<sup>27</sup>Wallace E. Lambert, Language, Psychology and Culture, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972).



that the study of bilingualism as a personal and societal phenomenon, especially in situations of conflict, is a critical area of psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic inquiry.

Lambert's research is of great value in the field of language acquisition and cross-cultural communication. His work is a crusade to establish a greater freedom for human beings to move freely and without discrimination across language and cultural boundaries.

Gerd Fraenkel<sup>28</sup>, dealing with language as a part of human culture, emphasizes the fact that language occupies an important place in our daily thoughts and actions and, as such, must always be viewed as one of the many facets of human culture because human beings, possessing an ability that no other living creature possesses, can express their thoughts in well-formed sentences.

Language, when viewed within the broad confines of culture as defined by Fraenkel, may be called a prime facet of human behavior. This implies that there are other facets that may be related to language. It would be informative to discover what these other facets are, and to establish some kind of relationship between them and language. This relationship between language and the other facets of human behavior is the basis for Fraenkel's work.

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<sup>28</sup>Gerd Fraenkel, Language in Culture, (Boston, Mass: Ginn & Co., 1967).

Though the influence of language on culture is particularly strong, linguistics and culture, according to Frankel, cannot supply us with truly comparable structural data. Yet it is quite clear that everything human beings do is tied to communication and language, whether in spoken or written form. It thus becomes apparent that there is a need to find out what place language occupies in the minds and activities of those engaged in various cultural pursuits. Culture as defined by Fraenkel is "the sum of all social activities, when generation after generation of human beings organize and reorganize their inherited values into patterned and symbolically interpretable facets of behavior."<sup>29</sup>

This book synthesizes a number of definitions of language and culture, and concludes that language can be derived from the definition of culture, since language is just one of the many facets of culture.

## Section Two

### IDIOMS IN GENERAL

#### Their Nature and Role in Language Acquisition

Dayfdd Gibbon<sup>30</sup> attempts to develop a description of

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>30</sup>Dafydd Gibbon, "Idiomaticity and Functional Variation: A Case Study of International Amateur Radio Talk," Language in Society 10, #1 (April 1981), Cambridge University Press: p. 21,22.

the use of idioms as a segment of a more general theory of language use. An evidence of that approach is drawn from the International Amateur Radio Talk (IART). Gibbon outlines main features of idiomaticity and a method for explaining contextual factors in language variations. The specific purpose of Gibbon's paper is to examine the relations between structures and functions in idiomaticity. The hypotheses are that the hierarchy of idioms from the morpheme to the level of literature can be generalized from literature to speech, and that restricted languages may involve idioms up to a level of higher discourse.

The rationale for these hypotheses is that it is essential that the hierarchy of idioms be understood to cover specific composite speech forms with a common property of structural frozenness (nonproductivity, membership of enumerable lexical sets) and nonfunctionally defined dialogue strategy types of genres. These forms, according to the author, must be noted as follows:

First, idiomaticity is scaled, ranging from weak to strong idiomatic combinations.

Second, idioms containing a "leaky point" as in discontinuous idioms, are tolerated. For this study, the author develops a highly structured descriptive approach based on three stages.

1. Structured sets of constitutive categories were developed by making successive distinctions within speech events.

2. These category sets were developed into constitutive systems by assigning to the members of categories properties and relations from a set of contextual parameters.

3. In order to explain functional variation, dynamic relations within a constitutive system can be defined as a controlled, self-regulating process of continuous adaptation to and modification of the ENVIRONMENT by PERSONS.

Since the above study is not clinical, its author only followed the descriptive approach as noted earlier, with no population or statistical analysis. It would be profitable, however, to speculate on possible extensions of the present approach in other areas of language use and variation: for instance, the possibility of accounting for some aspects of language acquisition in terms of progression from stereotypic "restrictive" speech to mixed restrictive and creative speech.

Indeed, a study of this type would be of much help to those who are dealing with language structure in handling the idioms for a particular language (phonology and syntax). This article synthesizes accounts of the linguistic problem of idiomaticity.

Maria Zwerling Sugano explores the special problem that idiomatic expressions pose for both the learner and the teacher of a second language.<sup>31</sup> She proposes a new classification of Spanish and English idioms for facilitating

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<sup>31</sup>Maria Zwerling Sugano, "The Idiom in Spanish Language Teaching," The Modern Language Journal, 65, (Spring 1981): 59.



their teaching and makes suggestions for a systematic integration of idiomatic expression into first-year Spanish classes.

Sugano concludes that students' difficulties in mastering idiomatic expressions indicate that these lexical items pose a special problem for the foreign language learner and that there is a need for integrating idioms into the teaching of Spanish.

This study focuses on Spanish idioms and points out the possible problems that the non-native speaker of Spanish might face in learning Spanish idiomatic expressions. The approach of this study is descriptive. It outlines a program of language instruction that attempts to acquaint the students with idiomatic expressions of the target language from the earliest stages of study.

Sugano hopes that the concepts presented in this article suggest a beginning direction for a more systematic integration of idiomatic expression into future research.

An article written by Arnold Glass<sup>32</sup> deals with four experiments that were performed to examine how familiar idioms are interpreted. Subjects had to respond as rapidly as possible whether an idiom had the same or different meaning as a phrase which, in half of the trials, was a

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<sup>32</sup>Arnold L. Glass, "The Comprehension of Idioms," Journal of Psycholinguistic Research 12, #4 (July 1982): 429-430.

paraphrase of either the figurative or literal meaning of the idiom. When subjects were instructed on the basis of either figurative or literal meaning, idioms were matched to their literal and figurative paraphrases equally rapidly. When subjects were instructed to respond only to the literal meaning, idiom-phrase pairs that shared a figurative interpretation took longer to reject as different from idiom pairs that shared no interpretation. These results demonstrated that whenever a familiar idiom is heard, both its literal and figurative interpretations are comprehended.

Glass points out that when the results of the experiments reported are considered along with those of Swinny and Cutler, conducted in 1979,<sup>33</sup> a consistent pattern emerges supporting the lexical representation hypothesis for idioms. To be sure, he believes, there are weaknesses in the individual experiments, but no general objection to the experiment can be raised. None of the objections made apply to the four experiments reported here. Idioms appear to be represented in the lexicon and the figurative interpretation of an idiom appears to be retrieved along with its literal interpretation whenever the idiom is encountered.

Glass' study is valuable in terms of its design and scientific approach, which contribute information to those

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

who are dealing with the results of scientific approaches in acquiring idiomatic expressions in learning a second language.

An article by Patricia G. Adkins<sup>34</sup> indicates that students may learn grammar and acquire sufficient vocabulary to communicate, but without a working knowledge of expressions, their spoken and written English will remain stilted and sound foreign. Their reading will be appreciably slower and their comprehension will suffer. For these reasons, the teaching of idioms and figures of speech should not be neglected but should be made a part of the study of grammar and vocabulary.

In order to substantiate this thesis, Adkins cites a pilot study which was conducted in two high schools, intended to determine the frequency of occurrence of idiomatic and figurative constructions in the reading materials presented to ninth grade students.

The results of the study revealed that idioms and figures of speech, while constituting a meaningful part of the English with which students must cope, were not readily understood. The students were deficient in their knowledge of such structures to the point of being handicapped in their ability to comprehend the context in which the

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<sup>34</sup>Patricia G. Adkins, "Teaching Idioms and Figures of Speech to Non-Native Speakers of English", The Modern Language Journal 52, #1 (January 1968): 148.

construction appeared.

The conclusion is that serious and extensive research is needed to determine how best to teach non-native speakers of English the use of idiomatic and figurative speech.

Another good resource in the field of language acquisition through idioms is a work by Ronald Feare.<sup>35</sup> The purpose of this workbook is to encourage the active participation of the learner in acquiring knowledge of the meaning and structure of American idiomatic expressions. It is believed that students of English, especially those of the intermediate and advanced levels at which this work is aimed, are capable of searching for and discovering much of the relevant information regarding proper idiom form usage with only minimal guidance and instruction from the teacher.

In this workbook, the author has chosen to employ inductive problem-solving techniques that focus on the meaning and structure of American idiomatic expressions. Much emphasis has been placed on the ability to guess meaning from the context within which an idiom is used and on the ability to figure out the grammatical features that distinguish certain sets of idioms.

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<sup>35</sup>Ronald E. Feare, Practice with Idioms, (London: Oxford University Press, 1980).



This book is a good reference for those students who are learning idiomatic expressions without teacher instruction and where minimal guidance is needed. In addition, it emphasizes the ability to understand the meaning of the idiom from the context and also the ability to figure out the grammatical features that distinguish idioms. The value of this reference is limited to those students who are at intermediate and advanced levels, and it does not contain any discussion about the cultural background of these idioms.

Harold C. Whitford and Robert J. Dickson<sup>36</sup> cover idiomatic usage of the American language. A large number of the most common idiomatic phrases and constructions of the American language are included. Each idiom is defined and its use illustrated in a sentence.

Particular stress has been given to the basic idiomatic constructions deriving from the common verbs. Specialized or esoteric phrases, which are often colorful but have a low frequency of use, have not been included in this book. Slang expressions have been treated only when such terms have become firmly established in the language.

This is considered one of the better books in the area of idioms and idiom usage. It is also considered a working

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<sup>36</sup>Harold C. Whitford and Robert J. Dickson, Handbook of American Idioms and Idiomatic Usage, (New York: Regents Publishing Co., 1953).

manual and textbook for advanced students of American English. The hope of the authors is that this handbook may serve all of those in America and foreign countries who need definition and explanation of idiomatic phrases they encounter in their reading or daily conversation. This work is also aimed at scholars and educated foreigners who are often at a loss to understand strictly American English.

A study by Adam Makkai<sup>37</sup> proposes a theoretical framework that accommodates all types of idioms in English without attempting to actually give an exhaustive list in any one dialect. The author re-evaluates the theoretical work done by Hockett in idiom formations from a stratificational point of view.

Makkai suggests that the term "idiom" needs to be redefined. He explains why non-morphemic lexemes do not qualify as idioms and how idiomaticity occurs in English on two different strata: "the lexemic" and "sememic."<sup>38</sup>

A set of criteria and a definition are presented for the lexemic idiom in the first idiomaticity area (lexemic stratum), and the membership of the area is illustrated by a number of representative examples. Types of lexemic idioms are discussed and defined with illustrative

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<sup>37</sup>Adam Makkai, Idiom Structure in English, (Ph.D dissertation Yale University, 1966), p. i.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

examples. This is followed by a set of criteria and a definition for the sememic idiom in the second idiomaticity area (sememic stratum), and the membership of the area is demonstrated by a number of examples.

The author also suggests that the two areas of idiomaticity jointly constitute the idiom structure of a language and that this idiom structure is as characteristic typologically of the language as are its phonology, morphology, and syntax. Finally, a short sample analysis contrasting English with an unrelated language, Hungarian, is presented in the appendix.

The second part of the study includes a partial classification of some of the most frequently used types of idioms in standard American English.

Makkai's study is considered highly valuable in the fields of typology, morphology, phonology and syntax of the English language structure.

The lexicon's contrastive analysis between the English and the Hungarian languages, while acknowledging that they are unrelated languages, shows some typologically similar idiom structures.

A related work submitted by Adam Makkai<sup>39</sup> discusses the types of idioms in the construction of the American

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<sup>39</sup>Adam Makkai, "After All This Fuss, What is an Idiom?" (Abstract) in Abstracts of the papers presented at the University of Kentucky Foreign Language Conference, April 29, 1972. 21 pp. (ERIC Document, ED 063820, 1972), p. 11.

(English) language. The writer of this paper classifies and defines idiomatic expressions into phraseological idioms and semantic idioms. Phraseological idioms are characterized by grammatical irregularities and unpredictable behavior under variable syntactic conditions. For example: to take a cab, to take a bus, to take a swim.

Semantic idioms, according to the writer, are of three kinds: lexemic, binomial and complex idioms. The lexical idioms are subject to erroneous decodability by virtue of disinformation. They come in identifiable types as in: hot dog, White House, Black bird. Binomial idioms are irreversible: nip and tuck, touch and go, cloak and dagger. The complex idioms are the longest and most complex: kick the bucket, take the bull by the horns, read the riot act, fly off the handle.

Jack Gandour<sup>40</sup> demonstrates how the deictic verbs of motion 'come' and 'go' are used in English idioms to indicate change of state rather than motion. In such idiomatic uses, according to the author, it is suggested that the basic deictic contrast between EGO and non-EGO governs the figurative, nonliteral extensions of 'come' and 'go'.

Gandour uses the 1974 hypothesis of Clark, which states that idiomatic uses of 'come' and 'go' are governed by the

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<sup>40</sup>Jack Gandour, "On the Deictic Use of Verbs of Motion Come and Go in Thai", Anthropological Linguistics 10 (1978): 381-383.



fact that the deictic center is some normal state of being. Data from Thai is found to support Clark's so-called normal state deixis as well as the closely related form of deixis that deals with evaluative viewpoints, so-called evaluative deixis. The writer of this paper discovered, however, that Clark's hypothesis was restricted to cases that involve a change in absolute state as opposed to a change in relative state.

The writer asserts that Clark has shown how the deictic verbs of motion 'come' and 'go' may be used as idioms to refer to change of state rather than motion. In such nonliteral or idiomatic uses, it is proposed that the goal or destination of the motion associated with 'come' is always deictic center.

Gandour's hypothesis is that the interpretation of such idiomatic uses of 'come' and 'go' is governed by the fact that the deictic center is some normal state of being.

His rationale is that since the motion 'come' always has as its destination the deictic center itself, the hypothesis would predict that idioms with 'come' always indicate entry into some normal state. At the same time, because the destination of the motion 'go' is specified as somewhere other than at the deictic center, it should also follow that idioms with 'go' should occur only to indicate departure from a normal state.



### Section Three

#### THE ARABIC LANGUAGE especially its idioms

A study by Ernest Abdel-Massih, El-Said M. Badawi and Zaki Abdul-Malek<sup>41</sup> is designed for intermediate-advanced students of Egyptian Arabic to serve as a course in the language, culture, customs and traditions of Egypt. This study presupposes knowledge of Egyptian Arabic on the elementary level.

The main emphasis in this study is on acquainting the American student with the important role of proverbs and metaphoric expressions in everyday speech in Egyptian Arabic. Proverbs in general, according to the authors, are representative of the culture, and Egyptians use proverbs and metaphoric expressions constantly.

The above study consists of four volumes. The first volume aims at acquainting the student with the people of Egypt, the second deals with Egyptian proverbs, the third is a reference grammar of Egyptian Arabic and the fourth includes basic high frequency words in different categories.

This study, which serves as a course for advanced students, is useful in acquiring the Egyptian Arabic

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<sup>41</sup>Ernest T. Abdel-Massih, El-Said Badawi and Zaki N. Abdel-Malek, A Comprehensive Study of Egyptian Arabic, Proverbs and Metaphoric Expressions, vol. 2, (Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1978).

as used daily in the Arabic language.

Anis Freyha<sup>42</sup> has compiled an excellent collection of Lebanese Arabic proverbs, using people's daily conversation as sources. This is not a scientific or historic study; rather it is an authentic collection of proverbs. The author was interested in collecting Lebanese folklore, nursery rhymes, popular songs and superstitions before they should be lost with the passing of this generation. In a rapidly changing Lebanon, he has chosen a particular village which has not yet felt the impact of westernization very strongly. The social, economic and religious life of the inhabitant Druze goes on uninterruptedly as it did in the early part of the last century.

In the translation of these proverbs into English, it was deemed best to give as literal a translation as possible, provided the translation made sense to a European reader. In the very few cases in which the literal translation would make no sense, a free rendering of the proverb is given. Freyha expresses his desire to give a transliteration of the Arabic for the sake of dialectology. But because of the poor printing facilities, it was not possible to do so. Also, he adds it would have been desirable to tell in detail how and when each proverb is used by giving examples. Such an attempt, according to the

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<sup>42</sup>Anis Freyha, A Dictionary of Modern Lebanese Proverbs (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, 1974).

author, would have made this work better.

Leslie J. McLoughlin<sup>43</sup> discusses the topic of proverbs and idioms. She attempts to give some insight into aspects of colloquial Arabic other than syntax and vocabulary. In addition to twelve lessons on the subject, there are lessons on idioms, greetings, ritual language, terms of address and reference, proverbs and abuse.

This book deals mainly with the Arabic language and its structure, and with different grammatical topics. The author refers to idioms in a brief reference to Arabic idioms as used in the dialect of Lebanon.

A manual such as this is a good reference to the Arabic dialect structure, particularly the Lebanese dialect. Indeed the students of the Arabic language and its structure and, in particular, the Lebanese dialect, can benefit from this source.

A reference to Magdi Wahba and Wagdi Ghali<sup>44</sup> includes a lengthy listing of political Arabic idioms as a dictionary, with English and French translations. The purpose of this reference, according to the authors, is to provide the Arabic language learner with political idioms. The intention of the authors in this reference is to make

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<sup>43</sup>Leslie J. McLoughlin, Colloquial Arabic (Levantine), (London: Kegan Paul, 1982).

<sup>44</sup>Magdi Wahba and Wagdi Ghali, A Dictionary of Modern Political Idioms, (Beirut: Librarie Du Liban, 1978).

available political idioms in order to enhance understanding in political matters among peoples of the Arabic speaking countries and to assist foreign politicians who are dealing with Arabs, to better understand the political problems of mutual interest.

This reference deals with political idioms using Arabic in its standardized form which politicians in the Arab world might use in the language of politics.

In a work by John L. Burckhardt<sup>45</sup> are included many of the proverbial sayings collected and translated into English by Sharaffideen Ibn Asad, a native of Cairo. The translator found these proverbs written upon nine or ten leaves in a commonplace book of a Shieck. Ibn Asad explains each proverb, or at least notices the meaning commonly assigned to it, as well as any peculiarity of language wherever the provincial idiom differs from the learned Arabic.

This study shows how the Arabs judge people and things, and in this respect it must be acknowledged that many are dictated by traditional wisdom.

A work by Cloud Field<sup>46</sup> in the form of a dictionary was examined. The author of this book has collected and

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<sup>45</sup>John L. Burchkhardt, Arabic Proverbs of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, (London: Curzon Press, 1972).

<sup>46</sup>Cloud Field, A Learners Dictionary of Arabic and Persian Quotations, (Beirut: Librarie Du Liban, 1974).



translated a group of Persian and Arabic sayings with a relationship between Arabic and Persian languages through Islamic and Arabic culture. This interrelation between Arabic and Persian cultures goes back to the early Islamic period where similarities between these two cultures dictated the usage of Arabic in Persia and of using Arabic idiomatic expressions.

This study could be very helpful for those students who are seeking to learn the intercultural relation of a particular area and for those who are studying ancient civilizations and their languages and cultures.

Farhat J. Ziadeh<sup>47</sup> lists a number of idioms and set phrases alphabetically, not according to roots of words. These idioms are used in Arabic as standard language and none of them deal directly with any particular Arabic dialect.

The reference to these idioms is an index to various historical, political and social essays with which the book is mainly concerned. These essays are written in Modern Standard Arabic and are followed by exercises to be translated into English. After each article there are notes which give the English meaning of some expressions which are used in these articles.

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<sup>47</sup>Farhat J. Ziadeh, A Reader in Modern Literary Arabic, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964).



The above book could be useful and helpful to advanced and intermediate students who are studying Arabic in its standard form. The study contains good material which shows the advanced structure of the language and the literary style of Modern Standard Arabic. In addition, the study uses many Arabic expressions which are of benefit to the learner of Arabic.

T. M. Johnstone<sup>48</sup> produced materials during the course of a period of overseas study leave in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. The author had the opportunity, as he mentions, of re-examining certain material from the area and of recasting the whole text in the light of this and further comparative work.

At the time this material was first collected, the author was interested in dialects of the Eastern Arabian littoral as mixed dialects and in trying to show how speakers spoke with a greater or lesser admixture of Pan-Arabic Koine, according to circumstances. Also he attempts to give what seems to be the forms most characteristic of the morphology of each dialect.

This study is a good source of the area of dialects and their structures. Even though the author refers to idioms as an internal part of the structure of these dialects, he disregards discussion of these Arabic idioms and

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<sup>48</sup>T. M. Johnstone, Eastern Arabian Dialect Studies, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

omits listing them as they are used in those dialects. It is clear that idiomatic expressions come through a particular culture where the dialect of that culture is heavily used, and that is a fact that is ignored by the study.

#### Section Four

##### CULTURAL CATEGORIES as Identified by Other Researchers

A recent Navajo-English dictionary<sup>49</sup> provides a chart of the Navajo kinship system, a two-page map of the Navajo nation, and English equivalents for Navajo words in 46 linguistic and cultural categories.

The dictionary includes words for: races (Indian and other ethnic groups); Navajo clans; age groups; Navajo religious ceremonies; body parts; sickness; clothing; grooming; jewelry; different types of hogan/houses and their contents; outdoor surroundings; tools; cooking; food; domestic and wild animals; birds; insects; plants; heavenly bodies; minerals; sacred mountains; rivers; creeks; social relationships; time; days; months and seasons of the year; office and school supplies; number; shapes, lines, and textures; colors; games and sports; community places and occupation of people; equipment and transportation; weaving, riding gear; towns and cities; adjectives;

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<sup>49</sup>Saad Ahhad Sinil, Dual Language, A Navajo-English Dictionary, (Rough Rock, Arizona: Rough Rock Demonstration School, Navajo Curriculum Center, 1983). p.1.

counting money; and mathematical terms.<sup>50</sup>

Sinil's study indeed contributes to the field of bilingual education in that it provides bilingual instructional materials and cultural background about the Navajo American Indian tribe.

Sparkman's report<sup>51</sup> on teachers of French in elementary schools presents an exploratory preview of the problem of teaching culture at the elementary school level in foreign language programs. The author explains that there are two basic premises of this report that underline the study: (1) the study of foreign languages and cultures is an essential part of education of today's children, and (2) language and culture are inseparable, that is to teach a "natural" foreign language, teachers must teach foreign culture as it is reflected in the language, and the language itself is the primary channel of expression of the culture.

This report, according to the writer, includes a discussion of the rationale for the Foreign Language Elementary School (FLES) curriculum, instruction evaluation and instruction materials. The report also includes a list of cultural categories from an outline of 88 French cultural materials. Among these categories are the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Lee Sparkman, ed. Culture in the FLES Program: A report by the 1965 FLES Committee of the American Association of Teachers of French, (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, [1967]).

following: Food consumption; drink, drugs, and indulgence; clothing; marketing; business and industrial organization; travel and transportation; living standards and routines; social stratification; interpersonal relations; marriage; family; kinship; government activities; political behavior; war; social problems; health and welfare; sickness; death; religious beliefs and religious practices.

Donald Klopff<sup>52</sup> believes that the key to educating children for communication in a multicultural society is to show them the components of intercultural communication and to make them aware of the characteristics that distinguish one culture from another. He also believes that the major components of intercultural communication can be divided into three categories: the determiners of behavior, the causes of behavior differences among people, and the ways people confront the unknown.

The author then explains that the determiners of behavior include experiences, needs (inclusion, control and affection), personal values, and beliefs. Differences in behavior result from perception, symbol usage (language), and role behavior. Confronting the unknown can lead to ethnocentrism, stereotyping, and prejudice.

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<sup>52</sup>Donald W. Klopff. "Educating Children for Communication in a Multicultural Society". Paper presented at the conference on Developing Oral Communications Competence in Children. (Araidale, Australia, July 15, 1979).



Klopf's study focuses on developing oral communication competence in children. It points out that the key to educating children is to make them aware of cultural differences.

A study by John Mergendoller and others<sup>53</sup> demonstrates cultural categories elaborated through meanings used by seventh graders at a junior high school to describe their teachers. The study examines the common expressions students used in open-ended interviews to describe their teachers and their experience within these teachers' classes.

The authors indicate that a semantic structure that underlines the terms that students used to describe their teachers was conceptualized in the following form: the highest level of abstraction and generalization include four foci (academic work, instructional facility, classroom experience, and personal characteristics), each of which submitted between two and four themes. Each theme referred to a spectrum of individual variation of a teacher's possible behavior and style of personality, with two evaluatively opposed contrast poles at which students' descriptions clustered. The authors explain that together

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<sup>53</sup>John R. Mergendoller et al. "Seventh-Graders' Conceptions of Teachers: A Cultural Analysis". Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (66th, New York, N.Y. March 22, 1982).



these foci and themes provide students with a semiotic space which is rich enough to convey their experiences of school life, and at the same time has the definition and specificity necessary for effective and precise communication with peers.

The writers conclude that the structure provides insight into the communication system and the perceptions and values of the sub-culture which students form for themselves within a school.

This study involves junior high school students in determining the cultural categories of meanings they use to describe their teachers. Although this study differs in perspective from the current research, it has no doubt contributed to the field of linguistics by examining the expressions students used in open-ended interviews to describe their teachers' behaviors.

Lorand Szalay and others<sup>54</sup> describe differences in perceptions and values between Americans and Iranians. They demonstrate how other culture groups, compared to Americans, differ in their perceptions, meanings, views and ways of thinking. The authors' comparisons of the two cultures is based on the following cultural categories:

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<sup>54</sup>Lorand B. Szalay et al. Iranian and American Perceptions and Cultural Frames of Reference: A communication Lexicon for Cultural Understanding. (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Comparative Social & Cultural Studies, Inc., 1979).

family, friendship, marriage, love and sex, society, government and politics.

Within each cultural category, the authors explain the differing cultural connotations of specific English words and their closest Farsi equivalents. For example, words discussed under "friendship" include friends, enemy, trust, fidelity, brotherhood, help, respect, and honesty.

The study highlights American-Iranian similarities and differences in a comparative, graphical presentation. It discusses the general trends of cultural values of both cultures and focuses on differential psychocultural dispositions that can affect interpersonal relations, rapport, and effective communication between Americans and Iranians.

The purpose of this study is to improve communication skills through better understanding of those who are culturally different. Its rationale is that "Americans living in a land of cultural diversity and in a world of increasing interdependence have begun to place a greater value on communication, both interpersonal and international".<sup>55</sup>

They believe that:

in intercultural situations, language is the most obvious obstacle but the culture in which the language is imbedded is an equally important though invisible barrier to successful communication.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Szalay's research constitutes an important contribution to the field of cross-cultural studies. It presents a comparative analysis of culturally-shared perceptions and meanings of spontaneous expressions of people's views, attitudes, and ways of thinking. A study such as this has a definite connection with the research being undertaken. The focus of Szalay's study is on a culturally-based analysis of spontaneous expressions of Iranian people's views and attitudes, and the emphasis of the current study is on a culturally-based analysis of Arabic idiomatic expressions. Szalay's study is a precise representation of the Persian (Farsi) language and culture and focuses on the relationship and patterns of several cultural values.

This review of the literature has shown that many books and articles have included a discussion of the natural interrelationship between language and culture, of English and Arabic idioms and their importance in language learning, and of cultural categories as seen by other researchers.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This study is a descriptive analysis of selected Arabic idiomatic expressions identified by instructors of the Arabic language as offering difficulty to English speaking students. It has followed the following process:

First, idiomatic expressions of the Arabic language that offer difficulty to English-speaking learners of Arabic were identified by means of a questionnaire completed by forty instructors of Arabic in the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Presidio of Monterey, California.

Second, an English interpretation and an English idiom equivalency of every idiom collected was determined by means of a questionnaire completed by forty advanced students of the Arabic course at the Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, California, to determine which of the Arabic idioms have no equivalents in English.

Third, the idiomatic expressions that have no idiomatic equivalency in the American cultural setting were analyzed and classified into cultural categories to determine whether they contain cultural elements characteristic of the Arabic culture and unfamiliar to the American culture.

Fourth, the cultural information needed to understand these idioms was determined.

### Informants

The informants of this study consist of two groups: The first group was composed of forty Arabic language instructors who determined those Arabic idioms that offer difficulty to English-speaking learners of Arabic. The ages of the instructors varied between thirty to fifty, and about one-fifth of this group was female.

The informants of this group have come from different Arab countries, where Modern Standard Arabic (Classical Arabic) is the official language used. The regional dialects, however, are slightly different from one country to another, even though the same heritage and similar customs and traditions are shared. The informants of this group speak the same regional dialect, the Syrian dialect. This dialect includes the following regions: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine.

The second group consists of forty American English-speaking students who determined the English translation and the English idiom equivalency of the Arabic idioms collected by the first group. All students are studying Arabic in an advanced course taught at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center (students who already graduated from a 47 week intensive Modern Standard Arabic



course) and are in a Syrian dialect course at the present time. Among the advanced level also are students who have studied the Syrian dialect in the past, have tested their knowledge in the field, and were assigned to the Defense Language Institute to refresh their language skills.

Dialects taught at the Defense Language Institute are: Syrian, Iraqi, Egyptian, Saudi and Yemeni. Since the Syrian dialect is emphasized, many of the graduating students are studying this dialect. Hence all of the members who participated in this study have a good knowledge of the Syrian dialect.

The bulk of this group consists of officers and enlisted members of the Armed Services. The officers have obtained at least a bachelor's degree and the enlisted members are at least high school graduates. All the members have passed several professional tests before being permitted to be in an intense learning environment where 5,000 students enroll each year to study one of the 40 languages and dialects taught at the Defense Language Institute. The age of this group varies from nineteen to thirty-five. One-fifth of this group are females.

#### Instrumentation

This study was carried out by using two types of questionnaires. The face validity of the questionnaire was established by having it read by three authorities in the

area of Arabic linguistics.

The first questionnaire was submitted to forty Arabic native instructors who were the informants (Appendix A), in order to determine those idioms in the Arab world that are difficult for English speakers to comprehend. The informants provided a number of Arabic idioms which are heavily used in the Syrian dialect. The questionnaire was totally open ended. The instructors were asked to list all the idioms that according to their experience offer difficulty to English speaking students. It was determined that only those idioms listed at least by three of the instructors would be included in the study.

The second questionnaire (Appendix B) was done after completing the first questionnaire. It includes the Arabic idioms identified through the first questionnaire. This survey asks whether there exists an English idiomatic expression equivalent to each of the Arabic idioms collected.

This questionnaire was administered to forty English-speaking students who are learning an advanced Arabic course at the Defense Language Institute. The students were required to study those Arabic idioms and state the English translation of every idiom, and to check whether these idioms have English idiom equivalents or not. The check lists were collected and idioms with no equivalents were categorized and their contextual background discussed and analyzed in order to determine the cultural information

needed to comprehend them.

In determining the English idiom equivalency, the interrelationship of both Arabic and Western cultures helped in providing linguistic and cultural similarities since both cultures borrowed vocabularies and interacted through mutual interest and cross-cultural communication in many aspects.

This cultural interaction between the Arabs and other cultures occurred back in the Fourth Century when the Greek philosophers and their Neo-Platonic commentators, the Greek astronomers, physicians and scientists were translated into Syriac and studied in the schools and monasteries of Syria and Mesopotamia. Gibb explains that:

There still existed also a pagan community in north Mesopotamia, who, under the name of 'Sabians', rendered great services to Muslim literature and science.<sup>58</sup>

Arabic literature and cultural contact, however, reached its Golden Age between the years of 750 and 1055, when chief names in the early history of the Arabs began to conquer the west. Al-Khwarizmi, for example, who is considered the father of Arabic mathematical science, did not only study the Greek works on mathematics and astronomy, but also the Indian systems which had been transcribed into Arabic. In medicine, the legacy of Galen

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<sup>58</sup>H. A. K. Gibb, Arabic Literature, an introduction, 2d ed. (London, Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 47.

was expanded by Ibn Masawaih and by the greatest of the medieval scholars, al-Razi, known to Europe as Rhazes. In philosophy, astronomy, geography and other fields, other great names such as Ibn Cina (Avicenna), al-Kindi, and al-Farabi impressed the west with their revolutionary theories and contributions.<sup>59</sup> In the mean time, the popular international literature of the Arabian Nights that is familiar to European ears, transferred through its folktales of a Thousand and One Nights, Muslim ideas and the image of the Arab mind and cultural elements.<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, several scholarly works of Arabs in Spain and France during the Arabic control of that part of the world, which lasted until the end of the 15th Century, were translated into European languages. Such works consisted of grammatical and lexicographical dissertations on various subjects, such as Qur'anic passages, old Arab tales, historical narratives and the like, with citations of traditions and verses of poetry.<sup>61</sup> This cultural interaction has, no doubt, resulted in some linguistic transfer during this period.

In fact, this linguistic transfer occurred throughout history, including the pre-Islamic period when the Arab

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp 65, 66.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

world interacted with the Judeo-Christian cultures and when these cultures interacted again during the Arab rule in Spain. Many stories, novels, and idiomatic concepts of these traditions became commonly known to Arabs and Europeans (and therefore Americans) alike.

While the Eighteenth Century marked a complete cultural isolation to the Arabs, the 19th century reached its peak of cultural contact between the modern west and the Arabs. In this century, the "western culture and western languages were to play an ever-increasing role in the cultural make-up of the Arab world."<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, the effect of Arabic translations of western literature on the development of Modern Arabic poetry from the rise of romanticism to the present day has been enormous. "This can be seen not only in the choice of themes and attitudes, but also in the diction and the very language used."<sup>63</sup> The development of Arabic culture was a role played by European schools in Syria.

Missionary activities by the Jesuits and the British and American Protestants were suddenly intensified and various educational institutions were established which determined the course of Arabic culture in Syria and the Lebanon.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>M.M. Badawi. A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 10.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.



These institutions played a formative and very constructive role in the movement of westernization in Arabic literature.

This cross-cultural communication between the Arabs and other cultures of the world seemed to assert that western cultural awakening was virtually impossible without Arabic influence and vice versa. The Arabic cultural renaissance, in fact, was also virtually impossible without western impact, especially through translation. Arabic language, in this regard, was forced to expand either through coining new words or adopting the foreign expressions after, or even without, arabizing them. At the same time, foreign languages, especially English, were also forced to expand by adopting and borrowing new vocabularies from Arabic.

Some equivalent English idioms however reflected a clear linguistic and cultural relationship between the Arabic and American cultures<sup>65</sup> as was reported in the data of Chapter IV.

#### Data Gathering

1. Procedures: This research study has collected those Arabic idioms that offer difficulty to English-

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<sup>65</sup>A complete chapter of English vocabularies of Arabic origin is found in: Munir Baalbaki, Almawrid, A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary, (Beirut: Dar El-Ilm Lil-Malayan, 1982) pp. 101-112.

speaking learners of Arabic by means of a survey to forty instructors of Arabic at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center. The collected idioms were presented by means of another survey to forty American students at the advanced level of the Arabic course at the Defense Language Institute, to determine the English translation and the possible English idiom equivalency of every Arabic idiom.

The idioms that have no equivalence in English then were analyzed and categorized to determine whether they contain cultural elements characteristic of the Arabic culture which make them difficult to understand by the English speaker.

Finally, the cultural information needed to understand the non-equivalent idioms was determined.

2. Source: The surveyed Arabic speakers contributed the major source of data collection. All of the forty native Arab speakers surveyed are current instructors at the Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California. All of the forty English speaking students surveyed are members of various government agencies, primarily the Armed Services.

#### Data Analysis

The responses to the first questionnaire were tallied and analyzed to create a list of idiomatic expressions identified by the informants. The frequency of the idioms

identified is stated on the report of the data in Chapter IV. On developing the second questionnaire the idioms have been listed alphabetically (Appendix B).

The second questionnaire identifies the idioms which have no equivalent idioms in the English language. Those idioms were analyzed to determine whether they are culturally based. An analysis was made to determine whether their cultural content follow within specific cultural categories, i.e. religion, family relationships, community relationships, etc. Their cultural background were discussed and analyzed in order to determine the cultural information needed to comprehend these idioms.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A questionnaire for Arabic idioms (Appendix A) was distributed to forty Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute to identify a number of social and religious<sup>66</sup> Arabic cultural idioms which may be difficult for speakers of English to understand. All questionnaires were returned to the researcher. All the respondents met the criteria of being native speakers of the Arabic language who speak the same regional dialect, the Syrian dialect, which includes: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. This was considered the major source of data collection.

The responses of the forty instructors surveyed in this study included a total of idiom production of four hundred and seventy-one Arabic idiomatic expressions identified by them as presenting difficulties for speakers of English. Each of the instructors produced the number of idioms depicted in Table One. In ranking the 471 idiomatic expressions, they were reduced to a total number of 100 different idioms, with a frequency as depicted in Table Two.

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<sup>70</sup>The researcher found that social and religious cultural idioms were sub-divided into other categories which will be discussed later.

A criteria was then established that the 76 idioms which were mentioned by at least three of the instructors would be included in this study (Table Three). Any idiom which was mentioned by less than three of the instructors was not included but was deleted from the study.

Table One

Instructor	Idioms	Instructor	Idioms	Instructor	Idioms
1	27	15	15	28	7
2	25	16	15	29	7
3	24	17	14	30	7
4	20	18	14	31	6
5	19	19	12	32	6
6	19	20	12	33	6
7	19	21	12	34	6
8	18	22	11	35	5
9	18	23	10	36	5
10	18	24	9	37	5
11	17	25	8	38	5
12	17	26	8	39	5
13	16	27	8	40	4
14	16				

Instructor's Idiom Production  
Total 471 Responses

Table Two

(16 responses)	8888888888888888	= 128
(11 responses)	77777777777	= 77
(17 responses)	6666666666666666	= 102
(15 responses)	5555555555555555	= 75
( 9 responses)	444444444	= 36
( 8 responses)	33333333	= 24
( 5 responses) excluded	22222	= 10
(19 responses) excluded	111111111111111111	= 19
Total 100 responses	Total	471

Histogram of Idiom Frequency  
Showing Number of Identical Idioms  
Reported by Different Respondents



Table Three

## Idioms and Number of Responses

Distance makes the heart grow harder	8	Far from here	6
The remainder is in your life	8	His onion is burned	6
The walls have ears	8	Father of two faces and two tongues	6
The iron is hot	8	Patience is the key to relief	6
Praise God for your safety	8	Knock on wood	6
Peace be with you	8	His head is dry	6
The cup/bowl is lost	8	You sit with health	5
His hand is light	8	Live a long fruitful life	5
His hand is long	8	To consume and wear again	5
He is swallowing a radio	8	Ink on paper	5
He wipes with a broad cloth	8	Put (it) in the saddle bag	5
His blood is heavy	8	Your mother-in-law loves you	5
Coming to request the hand of your daughter	8	Your soul/spirit is to you	5
Put your hand in cold water	8	May your dinner table be always spread	5
His manners are narrow	8	Spent the blood of his heart on him	5
His blood is light	8	He broke the fast with an onion	5
He came to beautify the eye, instead he poked it out	7	Your age is longer than mine	5
His blood is boiling	7	He is troublesome	5
His spirit is dead	7	God willing	5
He only sees himself	7	Praise be to God	5
He lives by the lack of death	7	His back is supported	5
He is fed up with his creator	7	There is bread and salt between us	4
She missed the train	7	Collect your strength	4
He is heart blinded	7	Striking his roots	4
His tongue is long	7	The pot found its cover	4
May you find him the same way you left him	7	Dear, yet the request is inexpensive	4
His soul/spirit by his nostrils	7	His stomach is big	4
The name of God upon you	6	He does not have taste	4
We longed for you	6	He has no blood (bloodless)	4
Eating air	6	Blood does not become water	4
The compensation is in your safety	6	You missed half of your age (life)	3
May God have mercy on him	6	Cut off from a tree	3
That which missed in his age may increase in yours	6	His saliva dried out	3
God protects you too	6	God makes you enjoy things	3
God gives him the right directions	6	His face scares the train	3
God bless you	6	Catastrophies are hidden under naive people	3
O God, defeat the devil	6	He tasted lots of bitterness	3
Hope the evil is far from you	6	He has many deficiencies	3

A few lexical phrases that do not quite fit within our definition of idioms were included because they had been repeated by more than three instructors.

After establishing a list of frequently repeated Arabic idioms, this list was presented to forty American learners of Arabic to identify English language idiomatic equivalents (Appendix B). The purpose of this was to verify which of the idioms indeed offered difficulty, even to advanced students of Arabic, due to their lack of equivalency in the English language or their peculiar cultural content. This step served to eliminate from the study those idioms that had a clear English equivalency.

The following list includes all Arabic idioms which were found to have an English idiom equivalency. These idioms are presented with their literal and English meaning, and the English idiom equivalent.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>	<u>English Idiom Equivalency</u>
أَشْتَقُّكَ	We longed for you	We missed you	We missed you
الْحَيْطَانُ إِلَى آذَانِ	The walls have ears	Some one may be eavesdropping.	The walls have ears
الدَّمُ مَا يَبْصُرِي	The blood does not become water	Kinship is deep rooted	Blood is thicker than water

Arabic Idiom	Literal Meaning	English Meaning	English Idiom Equivalency
بُوجْرَيْنِ وَلِسَانَيْنِ	Father of two faces and two tongues	Dissimula- tion	He is two faced
رُقْ عَلَى الْخَشَبِ	Knock on wood	To shield against evil	Knock on wood
فَاتَرَا الْقَطَارَ	She missed the train	It is too late for getting married	She missed the boat

The cultural usage of these idioms is similar and shows close relationship in both cultures and therefore they were not analyzed with the other idioms.

On analyzing the remaining 70 non-equivalent idioms it was found that they fall under two major cultural categories: social and religious. The first category, social, was divided into two major sub-categories: situational and personal. Those idioms which fall under the situational sub-category were considered to belong to the following cultural aspects: a. Social interaction, interpersonal relationships and friendship; b. Marriage and Family Relations; c. Invocational; d. Food; e. Occupation; f. Time and Politics.

The other idioms which fall under the personal sub-category were divided into a. Habitual activity, and; b. Character description of feelings, emotions and reactions.

The idioms which fall under the religious category were divided into a. Predestination and fatalism; b. Patience; c. Greeting; d. Compliment and Good Wishes; and, e. Sympathy Expressions. The following is an illustration to the above cultural categories (Figure 1).

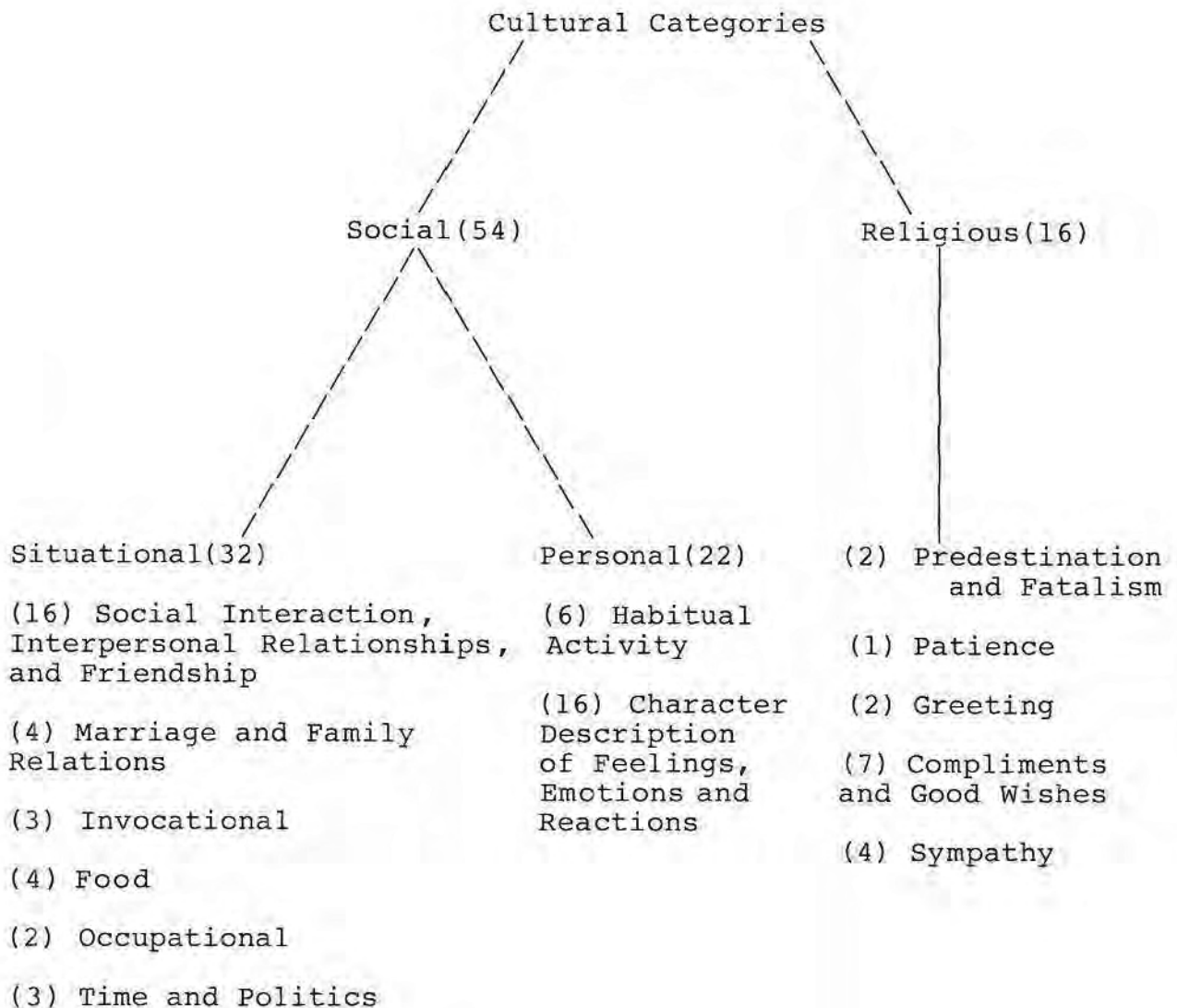


Figure 1

On sub-categorizing those non-equivalent idioms (Figure 1), the 54 social idioms were sub-divided into 32 situational idioms and 22 personal idioms. Among the 32 situational idioms there were 16 social interaction, interpersonal relationship and friendship idioms, 4 marriage and family relations; 3 invocational idioms, 4 idioms pertaining to eating habits, 2 occupational, and 3 time and political idioms. Among the 32 personal idioms, there were 6 habitual activity idioms and 16 idioms of character description of feelings, emotions and reactions. The 16 religious idioms, which are all situational, were sub-divided into 2 predestination/ fatalism, 1 patience, 2 greeting, 7 expressions of compliments and wishes, and 4 sympathy idioms.

#### Analysis of Idioms Within Cultural Categories

For the purpose of this study the term cultural category is used to signify the modes of life of the Arab people which were built up through ages and transmitted from one generation to another, as well as the values which sustained that life. Mansour Khalid states that "the Arab culture, more than any other culture, is a consideration of the content of Arab history".<sup>67</sup> Arab history includes religious and sociocultural realities.

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<sup>67</sup>Mansour Khalid "The Sociocultural Determination of Arab Diplomacy," in George Atiyeh, ed., Arab and American Cultures, 1977, p. 126.



### Category One

#### Social

In this study the term social pertains to companionship or mutual affection between individuals. The social factors of Arab culture have a pervading impact on human perception of situational and personal social experiences that include feelings, emotions, and value standards to social interaction, interpersonal relationships and friendship, invocational, marriage and family relations, food, occupation and economics, time and political aspects of Arab culture.

#### A. Sub-category: Situational

For the purpose of this study, situational means definite conditions, circumstances or situations contributed to the usage of the idiomatic expressions. Circumstances of social and cultural aspects vary in time, location and status of that cultural event. The following cultural aspect of social interaction and interpersonal relationship includes a number of situational idiomatic expressions. All the idioms that fall under the social category are either situational or personal. The following are the situational idioms:

##### a. Social Interaction, Interpersonal Relationship, and Friendship

Social interaction or interpersonal relationships in the Arab culture deal heavily with the relations existing

between members of a family group or a community in different formats. Idioms that pertain to love, affection, worry, apprehension, pride and understanding human behaviours contribute to this aspect of interpersonal relations which includes the behavioral patterns, traditions and life styles of the Arab people.<sup>68</sup>

The study of any cultural traditions and life styles requires the study of language and religion--the two major components of any culture. The impact of the Muslim religion on the development of Arab culture, as we will see later, is fundamental. To T.S. Eliot,

no culture can develop except in relation to a religion. Culture cannot be considered more comprehensive than religion, nor should religion be considered only as an element supplying the ethical framework to culture which is the ultimate value.<sup>69</sup>

As to languages,

it is assumed that they are the basis of all civilization, since they constitute the principle sign system that made intellectual interaction and transmission among nations and generations possible.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>As in the languages of many other traditional cultures, idiomatic phrases in Arabic are often couched in masculine terms. This does not indicate that they do not apply equally well to women. I have translated all gender references as in the original. The reader should be aware that unless specifically directed towards women, or involving gender specific activities, all idiomatic phrases apply to both sexes.

<sup>69</sup>T.S. Eliot, Notes Towards the Definition of Culture (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949), p. 28.

<sup>70</sup>Khalid, p. 126.

Mansour Khalid asserts that this is more true of the Arabic language than of any other. Arabic, being the language of the Qur'an, has acquired a certain sanctity.<sup>71</sup> This idea of sanctity of Arabic was underscored by the Prophet Muhammad when he said (in the words of al-Tabarani):

I love the Arabs for three things: because I am Arab, because the Qur'an is Arabic, and because the tongue of those who go to paradise, once in paradise, is Arabic.<sup>72</sup>

Therefore the Arabic speech pattern, especially the Syrian dialect, had a great impact on Arab communication and social interaction. The following idioms fall under the cultural aspect of social interaction.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الْبُحْدُ جَفَا	Distance makes the heart grow harder	There is a cut-off of contact

This expression is used when family members and close friends are away from each other for a long time. Such separation is thought to contribute to forgetting and loss of affection, making hearts grow harder. While the Arab mind speculates that "distance makes the heart grow harder", the American thinking is a complete contrast: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." In this context Arabs also say that: **الْبُحْدُ غَنِيْمَةٌ** (Distance is a gain).

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>72</sup>Quoted in the introduction to Lisan al-Arab, by Ibn Manzur (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1955), p. 7.

By this they mean that one can gain psychological relaxation if one can stay away from family problems.

However, the Arabic culture indicates that in human relationships it is not rare for friends and relatives to

become estranged from each other. Therefore جَارِكَ الْقَرِيبَ وَلَا أَخُوكَ الْبَعِيدَ (Rather a close neighbor than a distant brother). In such

a situation magnanimity requires one to wish for the other person's well being as well as that person's absence. Thus

an Arab would say of an erstwhile friend

اللّٰهُ يَسْعُدْهُ وَيَبْعِدْهُ

(May God keep him happy but distant).<sup>72</sup>

#### Arabic Idiom

الطَّائِسَةُ ضَائِعَةٌ

#### Literal Meaning

The cup/bowl is lost

#### English Meaning

Anarchy reigns

This idiom is used in a situation of chaos, especially when nobody knows what is going on. In such cases, people do not care about their duties or their role in effecting the result. This idiom is also used by people to describe a poor management situation where a state of disorder and confusion is in effect.

#### Arabic Idioms

إِجَابِيكَ لِمَا عَمَلَا

#### Literal Meaning

He came to beautify the eye; instead, he poked it out

#### English Meaning

He damaged the situation

This expression is used when help is requested to

<sup>72</sup>Sabbagh, As the Arabs Say . . ., Washington, D. C. (Sabbagh Management Corporation, 1983), pp. 34, 35.

repair or improve a valuable thing. Instead of assisting, that person breaks or damages the item. The wisdom behind this idiom is that if one requires help one should always ask the professionals. A similar contextual idiom the Arabs use is زاد الطين بلة (He made the mud more wet).

<u>Arabic Idioms</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
<u>حط بالخزج</u>	Put (it) in the saddlebag.	Drop the subject

This idiom is used by someone who does not want to pay attention to a conversation because it is not important or has no impact on him. The initiator of this idiom is the one who is usually listening to such a conversation when he asks the other person to forget about the specific situation.

The saddlebag in Arabic culture is carried over horses in order to be in service for the horse rider while travelling across lands for the purpose of moving, invasion, or sport racing. Arabian horses have great impact on Arab culture and Arab history. Many traditional horseback riders lead victory to Arab armies during Islam expansions because of two things: 1. Skill and courage of the horseback rider, and 2. Speed of the horse.

In the meantime, horses are very well known for fine sports. Arabs are culturally known to be skillful in this kind of sport. Horseback riding in this sense is an



excellent education to be recommended for elders and children as well. The Prophet Mohammad says: "Teach your children swimming, marksmanship and horseback riding (equitation)."

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
حُطَّ إِيْدُكَ بِمَيِّ بَارِدَةٍ	Put your hand in cold water	Do not worry, I will take care of it

This expression is said to someone when that person seems to be worried about handling a special and important matter. In this, the person who initiates the idiom is giving assurances to the other person that the matter is going to be easily solved. The usage of this idiom is generally derived from this expression **إِلَّيْ إِيْدُهُ بِالْمَيِّ مِثْلَ إِيْدِهِ بِالنَّارِ** (The one that his hand is in water is not like the one that his hand is in fire). Coolness to the Arab culture is characterized with cold water and worriness is likened to fire.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
رَمَتْهُ بِيْغْلِي	His blood is boiling	He is angry

This expression is used in a situation where one loses one's temper. That person would seem angry because of something intolerable dignity and self-esteem seemed to be hurt. In general, Arab ethics revolve around a single focal point, that of self-esteem or self-respect. Because one's self-

respect is so vulnerable to treatment by others, the Arab is extremely wary of being slighted and sees personal insults even in remarks or actions which carry no such intent.

The one most important factor on which the preservation of this self-esteem depends is the sexual behavior of the woman for whom the Arab is responsible: his daughter and sisters. Because of this central position of the women's honor or 'ird, the preoccupation with female sexual chastity has grown to a veritibly obsessive intensity.<sup>74</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
روحك إلك	Your soul/spirit is to you	It is not worth it. Nothing is worth this much.

This idiom is used when somebody shows apprehension or sorrow because of something which was done in the past or might be done in the future. People around such an individual usually use this expression to wish him/her happiness and long life. The Arab community is made up of groups the members of which are in constant and intense interrelationships, so the strong expectations of people illustrate their feelings towards each other.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
بشد البرقة	Collect your strength.	Have faith in yourself.

Strong expectations between members of the Arab community

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<sup>74</sup>Raphael Patai, The Arab Mind, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), p. 96.

are extended from family to neighbors and friends where this expression is said to a person who is passing through difficult situations such as sitting for exams or leaving family and friends for a noble goal far away. This idiom generally expresses encouragement and good luck to that individual.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
صَفَّ عَلَيْهِ دَمُ قَلْبِهِ	Spent the blood of his heart on him.	He did everything for him.

This idiom is used to describe a situation where somebody makes efforts to help another while facing many difficulties and going through hard times. The person who is helped in this situation is usually a son or a member of an immediate family. People usually praise a person who sacrifices a lot to help others. Members of the Arab community, in general, stand by each other in case of faction. They promote conciliation in case of friction and they come to each other's rescue in case of need.<sup>75</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
عَاشَ مِنْ قِلَّةِ الْمَوْتِ	He lives by the lack of death.	He does not deserve to live.

The concept of sincerity, devotion, loyalty and mutual

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<sup>75</sup>Sania Hamady, Temperament and Character of the Arabs, (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1960), p. 29.

help and assistance do not always include all members of the Arab society. Rather there are individuals who occasionally cannot comply with community duties or family obligations. This idiom is, therefore, used to describe a person in a situation where one does not take care of oneself or family members, and fails to perform properly duties toward society. This description also includes miserly attitudes in dealing with oneself and others and the financial support for one's family.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
عَافٍ الّٰى خَلْقِهٖ	He is fed up with his creator.	He is in a very bad mood.

In certain cases, this negative attitude can be even sometimes extended to formulate an extremely radical attitude for an individual towards one's surroundings including the person's creator. This expression, therefore, is used in situations where a person is in a very bad mood due to an unfortunate deal of life or passing through hard times. In such situations, the person is usually angry and irritated by other behaviors around him or her. In this context some of those negative emotional attitudes towards the creator are only verbally spelled out by those individuals describing that person. It is not necessarily true, though, that those negative attitudes mean what they say. Whatever the essence of those emotional descriptions, the God of Islam is

merciful and just, but an infinite distance lies between Him and those He had made. His relations with them are conceived primarily under the aspect of will, or edict, and obedience.<sup>76</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
نَشِفَ رَيْقُهُ	His saliva dried out.	He got tired of talking.

Social interaction in the Arab culture can be also demonstrated in this idiom which is used to describe a person who has tried very hard to convince somebody else to do something. People in general would praise that kind of person for dedication to keep others from misconduct. The Arab culture is rich in expressions that express the same situation. Among these are: كَلَّ لِسَانُهُ (His tongue got tired), and طَلَعَ الشَّعْرُ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ (Some hair is grown on his tongue).

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
أَكَلَ هَوَا	Eating air	Talking nonsense

This idiom also demonstrates the issue of social interaction where it is used to describe a person who is talking nonsense. This expression usually occurs in a situation where the verbal communication between members of a group has reached a point of heated discussion that may lead to a quarrel. The person who is talking nonsense, according to members of the group, would have either a

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<sup>76</sup>Albert Hourani, "Arabic Culture, Its Background and Today's Crisis," Perspectives of the Arab World, The Atlantic Monthly. October, 1956, p. 126.



positive attitude toward one's discussion mate(s) or a negative reaction where a fight may take place.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
عُمرُكَ أطولُ مِن عُمري	Your age is longer than mine	You took the words out of my mouth

This expression is used in a conversation between two people when one initiates a specific thought which the other was just going to express. This idiom expresses a good gesture to the listener that the listener is of the same line of thinking, and is probably going to live longer than the initiator.

Friendship to the Arabs is a matter of feeling. "One has only to read their poetry or listen to their music and folk songs to notice this."<sup>77</sup> Arab men hug, kiss, and weep to show their feelings and attachment toward their friends. Arabs are very generous with their sincere friends. They lavishly offer food and gifts to them. In doing so, they expect mutual liking and interest resulting from congeniality of sentiments which will have a tendency toward unity, conformity and affinity. The traditional symbols of Arab hospitality and friendship are bread and salt.

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<sup>77</sup>Hadia Habib Harb, The Teaching of Arabic Culture to Americans, (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 1978), p. 73.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
فِي بَيْنِنَا خُبْرٌ وَمِلْحٌ	There is bread and salt between us	We have established tied relationships

This idiom is used in a situation where someone is praising the kind of relationship maintained with someone else. The two people would be described as having a healthy, harmonious relationship. They would have gone through thick and thin together. In certain cases one often hears this expression in a form of invitation to build friendship. This expression then will say: "Eat at our house so that there will be bread and salt between us," meaning so that we will become friends.

It is interesting to note that bread has some sacred value attached to it by the Arabs regardless of their religious background.

It is considered a sacrilege to step on a piece of bread. Some people go to extremes to pick up a piece of bread from the ground, kiss it, put it on their forehead, then place it on an elevated place like a wall or a tree.<sup>78</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
غَالِي وَالْطَّلَبُ رَخِيسٌ	Dear, yet the request is inexpensive	Your wish is my command

This expression is used to express the availability of a special request by a dear friend. The person who requests something from a friend is usually highly valued

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

in the eyes of the friend to whom the request is made. The latter person often does his or her best, and sometimes goes out of the way to fulfill the request.

b. Marriage and Family Relations

The term marriage

is a union of two opposite sexes for love and procreation of legal offspring. It contributes to physical, mental, moral and spiritual progress of human beings.<sup>79</sup>

In a society where the family plays a prominent role in the individual's life, as in the Arab society, marriage becomes an important issue.<sup>80</sup>

In Islam, marriage often occurs within lineages, either to first paternal cousins or to other kinsmen. The reasons for this are inherent in the notion of preserving the family unit.

When a woman marries within the lineage, the property that she inherits stays in the family. When a woman marries within her own clan, she feels that she is offered more security as well.<sup>81</sup>

Marriage is governed by the principles and customs of the religious community to which the family belongs, and not by civil law.<sup>82</sup> Only religious marriage is recognized

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<sup>79</sup>Abdur Rahman Shad, Muslim Etiquettes, (Lahore, Pakistan: Kazi Publications, 1980), p. 176.

<sup>80</sup>Harb, p. 33.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

in the Arab world, especially in the area of greater Syria. There is still no acceptance of civil marriage as there is no person without religion. Religion is a social identity rather than a personal choice or preference.<sup>83</sup>

The following two expressions: "Coming to request the hand of your daughter," and "Live a long fruitful life," although not clearly idiomatic, were frequently reported by the instructors as difficult to understand. They focus on the issue of marriage in two ways; first, customs of marriage proposals, and; secondly, the value of children to Arab culture as the fruits of marriage.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
جايين نطلب ايدي بنتكم	Coming to request the hand of your daughter	Marriage proposal

This idiom is used on the occasion of requesting a girl's hand from her family for the purpose of getting married. The tradition in the Arabic culture is that the father of the bridegroom, or a well-known person of his family, is the one who makes this official request. This is, of course, after the initial agreement between the bride and the groom. Even though this idiom is used in western culture, requesting the girl's hand from her family

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<sup>83</sup>Raphael Patai, Society, Culture and Change in the Middle East, 3rd ed., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).

is a secondary issue since the main issue is between the bride and bridegroom themselves. In Arab countries, on the contrary, the main issue is not fully determined by the marrying couple themselves.

In rural areas marriages are often arranged by the adult members of both families. As a general rule, the wishes of the couple are taken into consideration. Likewise, the wishes and consent of the parents and relatives are often sought when a couple plans to get married. This collective approval is sought in order to maintain family solidarity and to establish a house with friendly family ties.<sup>84</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
تَعَمَّرُوا وَتَثْمَرُوا	Live a long fruitful life	Congratulations on your marriage

This expression is used to congratulate a newly married couple wishing them to live a long fruitful life which means long life, wealth and a large family. The Arab culture values children as the adornment of life on earth, and without money it is difficult to take care of children. The Qur'anic quotation **الْمَالُ وَالْبَنُونَ زِينَةُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا** (Money and children are the adornment of life on earth), reflects this human outlook of human value.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Sabbagh, p. 5.



### In Arab society

the family comprises more than just the members of the nuclear unit of procreation and orientation. The family consisting of the parents and the children is not the basic unit. What is of significance generally is the joint family, a larger family group consisting of the parents, their children, grandparents, uncles and aunts and ascendant and collateral relatives to the third degree or more. In most cases, the family is an extended group, covering non-blood relationships and friends to whom kinship terms are given as an index of nearness, love or respect.<sup>86</sup>

In Arab society, the family, and not the individual, is the social unit. The rights and duties of the individual are drawn in terms of the family, the center of community life. If an individual fails in his or her role within the family, that person is regarded as a bad character but does not lose membership.

Arab families are boy oriented. When an Arab family is expecting a child, they hope to have a boy, especially as the first born. A boy to the Arab mind is more useful to his family. "A girl leaves her own family to join that of her husband; a boy is more economically productive."<sup>87</sup> In other words, "the family cannot help but hope for a boy to carry on the proud traditions of the family name."<sup>88</sup>

The following two Arabic idioms support the issue of family. One reflects the positive understanding of the

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<sup>86</sup>Hamady, pp. 88-89.

<sup>87</sup>Harb, p. 59.

<sup>88</sup>Marie Karam Khayat and Margaret Clark Keatinge, Lebanon: Land of Cedars, (Beirut: Khayat, 1960), p. 50.

concept of family support to the individual, whereas the second lacks this support.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
ظَهْرُهُ مَسْنُونٌ	His back is supported	He is backed up

This idiom is used to describe a person who is backed and supported by family due to the size of that family and its social influence or due to the high ranking positions some members of that family hold in the government. This person is usually envied and feared by other people because of influence and power supported by the family. Patai reemphasizes this issue saying: "To the Arabs, a person whose back is supported generally comes from a big family with many sons or brothers."<sup>89</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
مَقْطُوعٌ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ	Cut off from a tree	Has no help from anywhere

This idiom is used to describe someone in a situation where all the family members are dead. In using this expression, people refer to such situations as unique but unfortunate, and, therefore, that person needs help and sympathy from all around him. Culturally, the Arab family is the backbone of the individual's reliance. Once this root is cut off by the death of parents, brothers and

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<sup>89</sup>Patai, The Arab Mind, p. 91).

sisters, all hope of family assistance is demolished.

c. Invocational

The term invocational means one of several forms of prayer in which the blessing of God is sought to individuals or groups who have performed certain physical actions. In the Arab culture, invocational idioms are those idioms which pertain to good health situations. Being healthy is a blessing from God and to stay healthy is the maximum invocation. The following idioms have culturally contributed to this aspect.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
تَقْصِدُوا بِالْعَافِيَةِ	You sit with health	Wish you a healthy stay

This idiom is often used when leaving a friend's house after spending some time visiting. In using this idiom, the visitors wish the host(s) good health and a nice stay always, in order to be able to welcome friends and visitors. The usual response for such an idiom is

اللّٰهُ يَعْافِيْكُمْ (God gives you health as well).

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
تَهْنِئْ وَتَجَدِّدْ	To consume and wear again	Congratulations on your new dress (suit)

This expression is used in wishing somebody with a new outfit to be healthy for a long time in wearing it and to live long to wear new outfits again. Good appearance and

modest outfits, whether in western or traditional clothes, is part of the Arab culture. The inhabitants of big cities dress in the latest western fashion. Make up and jewelry are used extensively. Villagers tend to be more conservative and traditional.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
مثل ماودّعوا تلاقوا	May you find him the same way you left him	Hope you get to see him again.

This expression is used in a situation where a dear person (usually a member of an immediate family) travels away for a certain objective, and the family becomes emotional because of the departure. Close friends, relatives and neighbors often express their feelings by wishing the family to see their beloved well and healthy again. The common response for this expression is تلاقوا الخير (You meet prosperity); which means, "May you always find prosperity in your own way".

#### d. Food

The term food as used in this study is the issue of generosity and hospitality of the Arabs in relation to eating customs. Hospitality of the Arabs goes back to Biblical times and further. "The greatest reward Abraham reaped was given to him by God because of his exceeding hospitality."<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Patai, The Arab Mind, p. 84.

Generosity and hospitality are synonymous terms in the Middle East, and one's hospitality is a measure of one's generosity. The importance of generosity is reflected in the proverb "Generosity hides a thousand defects."<sup>91</sup> No matter what the economic condition of the host, the guest is always treated. In fact, hospitality is an obligation of the poor as well as the rich. To the Arabs, the concept of hospitality is a virtue, where religious beliefs inspire an emphasis on courtesy and politeness.

To the Muslims, "Dining in congregational feast promotes cordiality and affection and is a source of blessing."<sup>92</sup> Whenever you are treated you should express a deep sense of gratitude to your host. Before starting the meal, the first and foremost duty of the believer is to recite the following prayer: **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ** (In the name of Allah, and upon the blessing of the Lord.)<sup>93</sup> and at the end of the meal, the believer recites the following prayer:

**الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ** (Praise and thanksgiving be to Allah who gave us to eat and to drink and who made us Muslims.)<sup>94</sup> or as a short cut expression it would be enough to say: **الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ** (Praise to God). When you

<sup>91</sup> Harb, p. 44.

<sup>92</sup> Shad, Muslim Etiquettes, p. 11.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 11.



dine at the residence of another, you should recite this prayer for the host: **اللَّهُمَّ اطْعِمْنَا وَاسْقِنَا** (O Allah! Feed him who fed us and give him drink who gave us to drink.)<sup>95</sup>

The following idioms reflect this cultural value of generosity and hospitality.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
حَمَاتُكَ بِحَبِّكَ	Your mother-in-law likes you	You arrived in the nick of time to share our meal

This idiom is used while a group of people are having a meal and an uninvited person comes to visit. Usually, in such a situation, the host initiates the above idiom to welcome the arriving visitor to join them in eating. The Arabs' characteristic of generosity "comes directly from their instinctive love of company, of people to talk to, and of guests to visit and share a meal or an event."<sup>96</sup>

Generally, when guests happen to drop in at meal time, even if they are not expected, they should be invited to eat, according to Arab hospitality. If this is not done, it could be interpreted as an inconsideration to the guest. Guests, however, may not wish to accept the invitation but they expect it. On the other hand, Americans do not expect an on-the-spot invitation and will not feel left out if

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>96</sup>Sabbagh, p. 27

they are not asked. The Arabs express their hospitality and love for their guest by the amount and variety of food they have at the table. They insist that their guests eat heartily.<sup>97</sup>

In order for the individual to maintain family solidarity and to establish a household with friendly family ties, it is very important that the spouse fit well with the in-laws, especially the mother-in-law. In this context, when the spouse drops in at mealtime, it means that the interaction with the mother-in-law is in its best condition.

Arabic Idiom

سُفَرْتَكُمْ دَائِمَةً

Literal Meaning

May your dining table be always spread

English Meaning

May God make you able to have plenty of food in order that you may always invite others to your house

This idiom is used by a guest who is invited to a meal in somebody else's house, after finishing eating. This idiom is considered as an expression of appreciation for being invited to eat in the house of the host. Generosity (كَرَم) and hospitality (ضِيَاة) are the two most important values in Arab society. Hospitality is the most specific and characteristic expression of the more general value of generosity.

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<sup>97</sup>Harb, p. 63.

Lavish generosity in traditional Arab society counter-balances the accumulation of wealth and the development of inordinate extremes of riches and poverty. It takes its place next to the Muslim duty of paying a 'poor due' or Zakat (the annual distribution of 2 1/2 percent of one's wealth to the poor) which is one of the obligations imposed upon the 'haves' vis-a-vis the 'have nots'.<sup>98</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
صام وأفطر عبصلة	He broke the fast with an onion	He was disappointed after being very patient

This expression describes a person who waits so long with many hopes to see something happen. This expression is often used in situations as when somebody stays a bachelor and does not marry the kind of woman that people think would be suitable for him. People use this expression to criticize such a person for waiting this long without getting something worthwhile. Even though this idiom has nothing to do with the concept of hospitality, it is related to the food category, at least linguistically.

Fasting is one of the five fundamental articles of Islam. The other four are: 1. To witness that God is the only God; 2. To witness that Mohammad is His prophet; 3. To make a pilgrimage to Mecca; and, 4. To pay Zakat (charity) for the poor.

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<sup>98</sup>Patai, The Arab Mind, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), p. 87.)

In the same respect the Arabs say **صَحَّة** (Health) or **صَحْتَيْن** (Double health), to express a healthy invocation after drinking and eating. The expression **صَحْتَيْن** (Double health) does not have any equivalent in English but is used like the French expression bon appetite. The answer to this is **عَلَى قَلْبِكَ** (literally, to your heart). A thank you is an equally good answer.<sup>100</sup>

e. Occupation:

For the purpose of this study, the term occupation means the state or condition of someone being employed, occupied, or kept busy, and suffering the hardship for achieving a certain goal in mind. Principally, when an Arab is assigned a certain task, the Arab will persistently stay after the aimed goal, even if it takes the maximum of one's time, thought and energies, until it is achieved. The following idiom is a reflection of this aspect.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
<b>زَاقُ الْأُمْرِينِ</b>	He tasted lots of bitterness	He suffered a great deal

This idiom is used in a situation where a person has suffered greatly while working on a certain task. This person would be described by others in such situations as a very hard worker and deserving of respect and sympathy. Such an expression is also used for situations other than

<sup>100</sup>Harb, p. 63.

work, as in sickness and pains. The sick person here would be described by others as having suffered a great deal before getting cured. The Arabs consider suffering inevitable in their life.

One who tastes the sweetness of life has to taste its bitterness. This is a proverb that depicts the attitude towards bearing pain. He who has not tasted bitterness would not appreciate sweetness.<sup>101</sup>

Business in Islam is the most respectable profession that you should adopt to earn a livelihood. The Holy Qur'an affirms: **وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ** (Allah has made trade lawful).<sup>102</sup> As a trade person, one should promote one's business by truthful means. One should not indulge in hoarding, black-marketing, smuggling, etc.

In general, Islam prohibits all devices of deceit in business.

It has been proclaimed to be an act worthy of unqualified condemnation. The trader who plies his trade fairly and honestly will rise in the company of prophets, saints and martyrs.<sup>103</sup>

The following idioms reflect the issue of marketing, indicating its usage after a certain economic shortage.

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<sup>101</sup>Hamady, Temperament and Character of the Arab, pp. 182, 183

<sup>102</sup>Abdullah Yusef Ali, trans. The Holy Qur'an. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al Arabia, 1968), 2:275.

<sup>103</sup>Shad, Muslim Ettiquettes, p. 57.



<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
ضاربُ طنابِه	Striking his roots	Available

This expression is used to describe a situation when people talk about an item which is plentiful and available all the time in the market. Since, on many occasions, some staple consumer items are not available in Middle Eastern markets due to economic shortages, people use this expression when the economic situations change and these items start to be available.

#### f. Time and Politics

The concept of punctuality does not exist in traditional Arab culture, and "the introduction of rigorous time schedules, demanded by modernization has encountered great difficulties."<sup>104</sup> It is not surprising that lateness for social, business or political appointments or even not showing at all is considered a phenomenon in Arab life, including inter-Arab conferences which sometimes open a day or two late.

Patai asserts that

this difficulty may have something to do with the general disinclination or inability of the Arabs to concern themselves with precisely defined timing.<sup>105</sup>

Arabs are much less concerned with time than Westerners.

The Westerner is always conscious of what has to be done

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<sup>104</sup>Patai, The Arab Mind, p. 66.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

and where he/she must be at a certain hour in the foreseeable future. Advance planning and scheduling is a basic part of the Westerner's everyday life.

When a westerner says: "May I come to see you tomorrow at five in the afternoon?" the Arab would announce "I shall come to see you tomorrow afternoon in sha Allah," meaning, "If God is willing." The afternoon referred to may be any time from noon to late in the evening. The phrase in sha Allah stamps any advance commitment with a note of uncertainty, in view of which it becomes clearly impossible and even to some extent improper to fix the time of a future act with greater exactness.<sup>106</sup>

This Arab traditional lack of concern with time occupies many areas of life as in missing certain occasions and special events as it is reflected in the following idiom:

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
فَأَنَّكَ نَضَرْتَ عُمْرَكَ	You missed half of your age (life)	You missed the occasion

This idiom is used in a situation when a person is expected to come early to a special event and he or she arrives late. People use this expression to tell that person that they missed him or her. In the meantime, they indicate that he or she missed all the fun and pleasant

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

time of that event.

Arab politics for the purpose of this study is what pertains to the public policy of a governmental political system and their relationships to the individual. In addition, it means the failure of a government or a political party to implement or call for control over treaties signed by Arab states or by political factions inside a single government system as in the current situation in Lebanon and the status of some unimplemented Arab summit decisions earlier. The May 17, 1984 peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel was never implemented. In essence it has remained "ink on paper."

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
حُبْرٌ عَلَى وَرَقٍ	Ink on paper	Mere ink on paper

This idiom is used by people in situations where signed treaties and written agreements have not been implemented. The agreement in this context would be of no real value as long as it has not been tested. People often say this expression criticising whoever signed the treaty and sarcastically blaming the officials for whatever outcomes may happen.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الحديدية حامية	The iron is hot	The situation is tense

This expression is used in a situation when a strained

state of relations between persons and governments or warring groups is in its highest condition of tension. People usually use this idiom to indicate that some kind of trouble is brewing. In such a situation, people are often scarred, tense and psychologically disturbed. Generally when the iron is in its highest degree of heat it is ready to burn and this is why when the situation is tense, trouble is more expected. The political situation in the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, is a clear indication of the usage of this idiom. Ever since the civil war in Lebanon broke out in 1975, the situation has always been tense between individuals, groups, fighting factions, and the government.

#### B. Sub-category: Personal characteristics

For the purpose of this study, personal means those characteristics of Arab people which pertain to a particular person, rather than to the general public. Arab personality develops "through the process of socialization by internalizing the values and ways of behavior of a society, through association with others."<sup>107</sup> In getting socialized, the Arab individual embodies the culture and becomes a representative of its pattern of behavior and its values.

To describe the personal characteristics of the Arabs several idiomatic expressions have contributed to this

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<sup>107</sup>Hamady, p. 22.

description by the means of two cultural aspects:

a. habitual activity, and b. feelings, emotions and reactions.

a. Habitual Activity

Habitual activity often consists of a habit or recurring action following usual practice, as habitual work activity. The following idioms reflect the personal behaviors of stealing, prattling, flattering or adulation, and nosiness as patterns of social interaction in a customarily habitual skill.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
أَيْدِي خَفِيفَةٍ	His hand is light	He steals (picks pockets)

This idiom is used to describe a negative behavior such as the bad habit of a person who steals other people's belongings. Theft in traditional Islamic law is a crime in which the right hand of the thief is cut in order to be an ideal lesson of punishment. The right hand usually commits such a crime and therefore it is the one that should be cut. Conservative Muslim countries, such as Saudi Arabia, still implement such a punishment but other Muslims and Arab states substitute confinement and a fine for this kind of punishment.

On the contrary, this idiom may also be used positively to describe a very skillful professional such as



a dentist or a mechanic.

A similar idiomatic expression **إِيَّاهُ طَوِيلٌ** which has a literal meaning of "His hand is long," has the same English meaning as the above idiom. "His hand is long," however, is also used to describe a person who has a habit of being aggressive by hitting others. This action is in particular used among children of the same household where one of the children (usually a boy) has the constant habit of hitting his brothers and sisters.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
<b>بالج راديو</b>	He is swallowing a radio	He is talkative

This idiom describes the person who talks a lot. The word "radio" in this expression is used as a device which is full of talking, and this is why the person whose habit is talking all the time is described as a radio.

Arab traditions, regardless of religious background, urge for meaningful speech when it is needed, as is documented by the following proverbs, **يُعرف المرء من لسانه** (A person is known through his tongue), and **تكلّموا تعرفوا** (Speak up. You will be known.) because as the Muslim Khalifite, Imam Ali Ben Abi Talib said, **المرء مخبوءٌ تحت لسانه** (The person is hidden under his tongue.)

However, once talking becomes empty and nonsense, then it is better to be stopped.

Arabic IdiomLiteral MeaningEnglish Meaning

لسانه طويل

His tongue is long

He is very talkative

This idiom is also used to describe a person who is always talking. Such a person can be categorized as nosy because of often interfering into everybody's business most of the time in a nonsense pattern. People generally try to avoid such a person because of this habitual activity.

The Arab literature is full of phrases, proverbs and sayings that contribute to avoidance of this bad habit of empty talk. Among those phrases, the Arabs say

خير الكلام ما قل ودل

(The best talk is the brief and meaningful),

اذا كان الكلام من فضة فالسكوت من ذهب (If talking is from silver, so not talking is from gold), and لسانك حصانك اذا صنته صانك (Your tongue is your weapon. If you protect it, it will protect you).

Tongue to the Arabs refers to speech. One who cannot control one's speech will regret it, as is stated in this Arabic proverb من لم يكف لسانه يندم (Who leaves his tongue uncontrolled repents).

Arabic IdiomLiteral MeaningEnglish Meaning

بمسح جوخ

He wipes with a broad cloth

Usually praises someone to gain his favor (flatter)

This expression is used in describing someone whose habit is praising other people, especially those who are higher than him in position or social status, to gain

blessings or a special favor from them. Historically, Arab poets used to praise Muslim head of states (Khalifites or kings) to gain their sympathy and admiration.

Tamallug (adulation)

تَمَلُّق

fills Arabic literature, newspapers, and magazines. The Arab bows to his superior and caresses him with flattering words, but barely does he turn his back, and he showers curses on him and kills him with criticism. This is so common that discreetness in the absence of a person is made an ideal value, hard to live up to. An Arab desiring a favor from a disliked person goes out of his way to show his love, to point out their common interests, and to refer to far-fetched close ties between their forefathers. He does not recoil from false affiliations if he knows that he can thus reach his goal.<sup>108</sup>

Arabic Idiom

كثير غلبه

Literal Meaning

He is troublesome

English Meaning

Others can be disturbed by his continuous demands

Even though this expression did not meet the criteria of idiomaticity, it is a phrase that was repeated by more than three instructors as difficult for English speakers to understand, and therefore, it is listed and analyzed.

This expression is used to describe a character who is always demanding and does not understand or care for other people's feelings and situations. This kind of person is negatively criticized and avoided by people for these repeated demands.

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<sup>108</sup>Hamady, pp. 66, 67.

The Arab asks many personal questions such as: "How much did you pay for this item?" "How do you support yourself?" "What is wrong with your health?" and so forth. He likes to deal with people on a personal basis, and insists also on a personal answer. He feels it to be his right to know about the private life of the people with whom he interacts. A delicate, formal and objective answer will offend him and make him angry.<sup>109</sup>

#### b. Feelings, Emotions and Reactions

This aspect refers to a combination of qualities of feelings and emotions that distinguish Arabs in their own society. Those qualities are considered marks or traits and commonly attributed to any person's standing and reputation.

The following idioms contribute to personal characteristics in the following traits: unpleasant person, senseless, personable, rude, upset, mad, confused, arrogant, stubborn, sneaky, always in a hurry, slow respondent, culturally weak, glutton, perfect or ugly.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
دَمُهُ ثَقِيلٌ	His blood is heavy	He is an unpleasant company

This expression is used to describe a person whose character is not liked by others. Such persons are always avoided by friends and other people because of their lack of gentleness and charm.

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<sup>109</sup>Hamady, p. 32.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
ما فيه دم	He has no blood (Bloodless)	He has no feelings toward others

This expression is used to describe a person whose character is also not liked by others. Such a person is always avoided by others because of the lack of feelings and sensitivity.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
دمه خفيف	He is light blooded	Personable

This idiom is used to describe someone who is cute, personable, nice, easy to be with, charming and pleasant to have as company.

The relation to the word "blood" in the above three idioms, to Arabic culture, is vital. Internally, the Arab family is held together by the blood-tie of descent in the male line which is the basic social bond. The individual's character is determined by one's type of blood. If the blood is heavy then the individual lacks gentleness and charm; if one does not have blood, one's personality lacks feelings. But if one's blood is light, then the person is personable.

The blood relation in the Arab family is as intimate and binding as the cambium between the wood and the bark of the twig where as "Nothing can sympathize with a twig more than its bark."<sup>110</sup> In fact, "blood can never turn into



water." This idiom is used in a conflict situation in which one supports one's relative against one's own friend. "Such loyalty is expected from him, even by his friends, who would despise him if he did otherwise."<sup>111</sup> When conflict situations are intensified in tribal and village life, blood revenge is demanded. This means that "blood demands blood" which is actually avenging by killing whoever murdered the other family's relatives or to kill one of the murderer's relatives.

Today, among urban Arabs, recourse to private blood vengeance between families has completely disappeared. This is also true among the inhabitants of rural areas. The law holds only the killer as the responsible person, and no relative has any right to avenge a death.

A vigorous demonstration of emotions and feelings, however, is characteristic of the Arabs in certain moods. The Arab would be tasteless and rude in a reaction to a certain emotion that he or she is annoyed by. This person would be described as follows:

Arabic Idiom

لا عنده ذوق

Literal Meaning

He has no taste

English Meaning

Tasteless, rude  
disturbed by his  
continuous demands

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<sup>110</sup>Hamady, p. 90.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

Even though this expression did not meet the criteria of idiomaticity, it is a phrase that was repeated by more than three instructors as difficult for English speakers to understand, and therefore, it is listed and analyzed.

This expression describes a person who is considered rude and insensitive to others. Such a person is often avoided by people, especially in social gatherings, because he is not gentle and lacks respect and understanding of community etiquette.

Anger is a natural emotion to the Arab. It is represented with the following two idioms:

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
خُلِقَ ضَيِّقًا	His manners are narrow	He gets upset easily

This idiom is used to describe a person whose temper is short and easily gets upset for unimportant reasons. This kind of person usually fights with others and people sometimes cannot understand that person's intentions.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
رُوحُهُ بِبَابٍ مَنَاحِيرَهِ	His soul/spirit by his nostrils	Very mad, can not take it anymore

The Arab man's temperament is nervous and the least provocation antagonizes him. He flares up easily and does not restrain from outbursts, and once arisen, his wrath has no limits. In this case, the Arab man's control over his

fury is weak and precarious.

The outbursts of anger of most people, however, do not last long, soon they apologize and try to make up with those they have antagonized. The proverb points to the fast subsiding of a flare of anger-- "Temper is at the beginning a madness, at the end a regret."<sup>112</sup>

أول الغضب جنون وآخره ندم

Among the factors that provoke anger are gossip and nonsense talk. Some people make gossip an occupation. "Gossip no doubt, channelizes the aggressive feelings accumulated from a multitude of frustrating experiences in the life of the Arab."<sup>113</sup>

Gossip, nonsense talk and rumor result in serious embroilment if they touch any question of sharaf (honor). The Arab is ruled by a strange pride which called sharaf and which is valued almost above life itself. Scold an Arab man or call him ugly names, and he is ready to knife you.<sup>114</sup> "His temper explodes to the limit when his honor has been attacked."<sup>115</sup>

When 'ird, the reputation of the sexual honor of the Arab womenfolk is attacked, it would become one of the most inflamitory causes of confusion, then anger, and maybe murder.

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<sup>112</sup>Hamady, p. 49.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>H.R.P Dickson, The Arab of the Desert, (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1951), p. 55.

<sup>115</sup>J. Magnin, "La psychologie de l'oriental," Ibla V (Autumn, 1942), pp. 347-368.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
شاف حاله	He only sees himself	He is arrogantly proud of himself

Even though this expression did not meet the criteria of idiomaticity, it is a phrase that was repeated by more than three instructors as difficult for English speakers to understand, and therefore, it is listed and analyzed.

This expression is used to describe a person who arrogantly considers himself better than others. Such an individual is usually conceited and sees himself socially on a higher level than others. The fact is, this type of person is not realistic in giving himself this undeserved social status, and therefore is generally ignored by others.

The Arab is characterized by an inflated personality. He shows overt self-confidence, challenges and manaces anyone who accuses him of fear, and demonstrates daring and courage.<sup>116</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
رأسه ناشفه	His head is dry	He is stubborn

This idiom is used to describe a person who refuses to accept advice yet follows his or her own thinking. This expression also refers to a conservative person who is especially proud of his or her past and culture but stubbornness and complexity lead to rigidity sometimes.

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<sup>116</sup>Hamady, p. 59.

The Arab is proud; he highly values his self-respect and the esteem of others. He would deprive himself of many pleasures if their satisfaction were to hurt his dignity. He does not easily ask for external help.<sup>117</sup>

An Arabic proverb will document this: "I'd rather die from starvation than ask for help." This strict obligation to be proud is also documented by this proverb: "The head that has no price deserves to be cut."

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
يما تحت السّواحي دّواهي	Catastrophes are hidden in naive people	Sneaky

This idiom describes a person who seems to be naive but actually is sneaky. This kind of an individual is usually intelligent and acts quietly. People fear a person like this and they are careful of what they say. This expression is used by people to express some kind of respect and admiration for such a character.

For the Arab social system,

when an Arab becomes familiar with a person he would know no bounds. He would trespass on any privacy, he would ask the impertinent personal questions, he would lay bare his opinions and feelings, and would expect many services from and strong ties with the other. Quite often such familiarity engenders serious quarrels.<sup>118</sup>

Being quietly intelligent, this person would avoid a

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 71.



blunt refusal to any demand, always trying to get around the word "no", resorting to any means of escape, including lies. In short, such a person is a diplomat.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
بَصْلُهُ مَحْرُوقَةٌ	His onion is burned	Always in a hurry

This idiom describes a person who is always in a hurry to do things. Such a person would be described by others as quick-tempered and impatient.

The word "onion" refers to the cerebellum, the area of the back of the brain which is shaped somewhat like an onion. It is involved primarily in "...the coordination of posture and in locomotion."<sup>119</sup> Once the cerebellum is in its highest functional condition it effects the person's movement and reflects the temper. In any case, the Arab's temperament, as was mentioned earlier, is nervous and the least provocation antagonizes.

Quick temper and self-control are the sharply contrasting features inherent in the Arab personality. The very same Arab whose character is hostile and quarrelsome, who shows extreme emotionalism in easily aroused anger and sorrow, does not ordinarily demonstrate his joys, fears, and weaknesses.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>Psychology, Physiology. Encyclopedia Britannica: Macropedia, v. 15, 1977, p. 159.

<sup>120</sup>Hamady, p. 54, 55.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
روحه ميت	His spirit is dead	Partially introverted-- responds slowly to actions

This idiom is used to describe somebody who is partially introverted and whose response to an active situation is very slow. Therefore, interaction with others would be very cold. People sometimes think of this kind of individual as not alive at all.

Although the Arab is an outgoing person who constantly relates himself to those around him, he treasures an inner self, the secrets of which he does not communicate easily to others.<sup>121</sup>

In this sense the Arab would be primarily and fundamentally a sad human being whose response to the outside world would be very limited.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
زلاته كثيرة	He has many deficiencies	He has cultural weaknesses

This idiom is used to describe a person who always makes mistakes in dealing with others. It seems that this kind of person is always lacking certain cultural understanding of the society he or she belongs to and does not have the sense of etiquette in this human interaction.

It appears to be that the pride of this kind of person accounts for being on guard. When the Arab makes cultural

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<sup>121</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

mistakes, he or she often hides weaknesses, unhappiness and poverty.<sup>122</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
كَبِيرُ بَطْنٍ	His stomach is big	He eats too much

This expression is used to describe a person who sometimes eats an excessive amount of food and greedily overfilling the stomach. This person would be described by others as a glutton or greedy, which is considered culturally a shameful act and against the Arab and Muslim etiquettes regarding drinking and eating.

Social pressure in Arab society is tremendous. One should be very careful about one's manners, appearance, habits, and behavior.

Public opinion is the main force that judges, praises, or condemns the behavior of the individual. It is the immediate as well as the ultimate power for controlling his actions.<sup>123</sup>

When it comes to food manners, the Muslim etiquettes regarding eating emphasize that when you eat or drink you use your right hand. You should not eat too much because it is injurious to your health.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>124</sup>Shad, Muslim Etiquettes, p. 10.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
قلبه معمي	He is heart blinded	Confused, Mixed up

This idiom is used to describe a mixed up person who cannot find the right way to do things in dealing with and solving problems. People usually show sympathy to such a person and think that help is needed.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
طنجرة ولقيت عطاها	The pot found its cover	Perfect match between two people

This expression is used to describe two people (usually male and female) whose characters are similar with much the same behavior and attitude so that people consider them a perfect match. The expression in the Arab culture is usually used in a negative connotation to describe the individuals involved.

Occasionally there exists in the Arab society a couple that has almost the same feelings, emotions, habits, attitudes and sometimes even appearance. When this couple is negatively described, people sarcastically say they are a perfect match. The following Syrian common saying documents this: يا شكلي تعال عندي (O, my identical, come to me.)

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
وجوهه بجفل الترين	His face scares the train	He is very ugly

This expression is used to describe a person whose face is very ugly. This kind of individual would be unfortunate because he or she would be disliked by people due to ugliness. In this regard, the Arabs value the beauty of the face as a grace from God. People often say

الله يحب الجمال (God loves beauty). Therefore, whoever enjoys a beautiful face (appearance), especially a female, is considered lucky.



## Category Two

### Religious

For the purpose of this study, the term religious means those feelings and moral traditions which manifest the socio-religious system of the Arab culture.

Without Islam and Arabic language there would have been no Arab civilization. In the words of Edward Atiyeh, the great Arab cultural achievement could not have been realized but for

the possession of one of the finest and most expressive forms of speech ever fashioned by the mind and tongue of man. Islam itself is unmistakable except in terms of the spoken Arab word.<sup>125</sup>

"Islamic influence permeates Arab society because the realms of God and Caesar are neither divided nor delineated in it as they are in Christianity."<sup>126</sup> Islam, like Judaism, provides "a complete system of social legislation based on divine sanctions. Islam comes nearer to Judaism than to Christianity." On the other hand, like Christianity, it delivers "a universal rather than a tribal message."<sup>127</sup>

Islam was the one major factor that saved the Arabic

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<sup>125</sup>Edward S. Atiyeh, The Arabs (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 22.

<sup>126</sup>Mansour Khalid, "The Sociocultural Determinations of Arab Diplomacy", in Arab and American Cultures, George Atiyeh, ed., (Washington, D.C.: American Interprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1977), p. 129.

<sup>127</sup>Atiyeh, The Arabs, p. 14.

language from degeneration. Through Islam, Arabic language and culture found their way permanently to all the Arab states and in countries so far and wide.

The attempt to establish religion (Islam) as the only viable force for Arab unity, however, met with resistance from those claiming that language and culture are the most important formative forces of national unity. Needless to say, many adherents of the latter view were Christian Arabs.<sup>128</sup>

Religion, no doubt, is the fundamental motivation force in most aspects of Arab civilization and has its say in practically every act and moment in life. Tradition, however, occupies a strong position as a regulator of individual and group actions. This sense of tradition is part of the Arabs respect for the past which is primarily every Arab's wish to preserve and keep alive.<sup>129</sup>

The name of God in Islam dominates the Arab's social relations, even the most prosaic.

Not only in public but also in his privacy the Arab unceasingly invokes the name of God to reign over his actions. God, in Islam, is everything; He is not a dogma but an ideal and a regulative force of life. He is in matter and everyday life as much as He is in the spirit.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>Khalid, p. 130.

<sup>129</sup>Hamady, pp. 153-155.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

"God provides; God distributes His benefits; God protects; God gives blessings; God does everything; and God is in everything." The habitual consciousness of God in everything is so deep rooted that He is always invoked even when His name is not pronounced<sup>131</sup> as we will see in some of the following expressions. All religious idioms presented below are based on particular situational circumstances which show social relations among the Arabs and controlled by the following cultural beliefs and values: Predestination and fatalism, Patience, Greeting, Compliments and Good Wishes, and Sympathy.

a. Predestination and Fatalism

Human responsibility is not alien to the Arabs in their conception of behavior. The individual is held responsible for his or her actions before law, religion, and public opinion. However, in this attitude towards the world, in the direction of one's life, and the execution of one's efforts, the Arab manifests a dominating belief in the influence of predestination and fatalism. Arabs are little aware of the fact that they can, to a large extent, control their environment, contribute toward shaping their destiny, realize their wishes through conscious management, and ameliorate their lot by their own actions.<sup>132</sup> The

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<sup>131</sup>Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid., pp. 184, 185.

following two expressions reflect this issue.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الحمد لله	Praise be to God	Thank God it happened <u>or</u> it will happen

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
نشا الله (ان شاء الله)	If God wills <u>or</u> If it pleases God	Hope it will come to be true

Whenever an Arab does anything, or tells anything, or hears of anything, they accompany it, or receive the news with phrases such as *بسم الله* (In the Name of God) or *الله أكبر* (God is great) or *الحمد لله* (Praise be to God). All references to the future, to what one plans to do or hopes will happen, contain the expression *نشا الله* (If God wills).<sup>133</sup> This indicates that God alone is the master of all that happens as well as the thoughts, acts and plans of the Arab individual.

When an American asks an Arab to come over or to do a certain chore, the typical Arab answer is *نشا الله* (God willing). This is a vague statement which does not involve any commitment on the part of the speaker. It is quite annoying to the American listener who is left in an ambiguous situation. The idiom *نشا الله* (God willing) can be interpreted in two ways: 1) Yes, I will come; or 2) Maybe I will come. One never knows which meaning the

<sup>133</sup>Patai, The Arab Mind, p. 150.

speaker intends.<sup>134</sup> These expressions of reliance on the inscrutable will of God, however, have a profound influence on the mentality of Arabs and Muslims as well.<sup>135</sup>

b. Patience

Patience, as the ability to bear difficulties, is of great importance in the survival of the Arab. It is considered the most powerful weapon in life to triumph over hardships and miseries as appears in the following expression:

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الصَّبْرُ مُفْتَاخُ الْفَرَجِ	Patience is the key to relief	Be patient

This expression is derived from the Qur'anic saying *إِنَّ السَّابِقِينَ الصَّابِرِينَ* (God is with those who are patient). It is used by people in situations where a person is sad, angry, upset, antagonized by others or waiting for a long time to achieve a certain cause. People usually use this idiom to calm that person and make them feel relaxed.

Patience is considered a cure to everything. Everything has its remedy in patience, except the lack of patience itself. The Arabs believe in the rewarding results of patience. "He who has patience in the leanness

<sup>134</sup>Harb, p. 67.

<sup>135</sup>B. Lewis & Assoc., eds., The Encyclopedia of Islam, v. III, (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1971), p. 1196.



of night will gather his fatness." "Patience transforms bitterness to sweetness." Patience is joined by wisdom. "The world moves but does not fall." "Take things from their managable side." "Not to regret a thing, suppose it never existed." Furthermore, there is consolation in patience. "If this year passes, hope for another."<sup>136</sup>

### c. Greeting

From the point of view of the Muslim a greeting means to wish happiness in the future life. The following two greeting expressions contribute to illustrate this concept:

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
السلام عليكم	Peace be with you	Hello

This expression is used by people as a salutation. It is used any time of the day or night. Basically it is considered an international greeting used by Muslims and some non-Muslim Arab communities. To the Muslims, this salutation is a religious obligation, for the Qur'an commands "...When you enter houses, greet one another with a greeting from God, blessed and good."<sup>137</sup> A tradition maintains that the Prophet has said: "To him who says

السلام عليكم (Peace be with you), Allah would record ten good deeds, twenty for **ورحمة الله** (And God's compassion), and

<sup>136</sup>Hamady, pp. 181, 182.

<sup>137</sup>A.J. Arberry, The Koran Interpreted, 2 vol. (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1955), 24:61.

thirty for **وبركاته** (And his blessing).<sup>138</sup>

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
<b>الحمد لله عاى السلامة</b>	Praise to God for your safety	Thank God you're well and safe

This idiom is used in situations where somebody is returning from a trip, recovering from sickness, escaping from a critical situation, etc. One is addressed, "Thank God, you are safe." With intonation, however, the expression is said in a sarcastic manner to an individual who comes very late to a certain planned gathering or a meeting.

The phrase **الحمد لله** (Praise to God) is often considered a **شكراً** (Thank you) answer to the greeting **كيف حالك** (How are you). That phrase is accompanied by every form of acknowledgment of kindness which is the code of greeting. This shows how much social relations among the Arabs are regimented by religious imperatives."<sup>139</sup>

#### d. Compliments and Good Wishes

The formula for compliments and wishes using God's name in Arabic culture are endless and all are reminders of the power and protection of God as well as of his goodness. The following idioms reflect this view:

<sup>138</sup>Hamady, p. 160.

<sup>139</sup>Hamady, p. 161.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
اسم الله عليك	The name of God upon you	God protect you

This expression is used in a situation where a child has accidentally fallen, gotten scared of something, or cried because of pain. In this situation, the child's mother uses God's name in order to seek help and hope for the child to be protected from harm. This idiom is also used in a situation where a healthy child is visiting or visited by others. People in this situation admire the child, wishing health and protection from evil always.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الله يسلمك	God protects you, too	Thanks for your concern

This idiom is used in response to the greeting (Praise to God for your safety). The person who is greeted on homecoming or the one who is cured from sickness or escapes from harm usually thanks the others, wishing them protection and safety from evil.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الله يرشدك	God gives him the right directions	God be with him to show him the right way

This expression is used in a situation where a child or an elder son or daughter is following a bad habit and the parents want them to change it. Parents in this situation pray for their child, hoping that God will help

the child to come back to their senses and get better direction. This idiom is derived from the Holy Qur'an's opening chapter (Fatiha), where it says in verse 6:

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (Show us the straight way), which means, "We must ask for God's guidance. With a little spiritual insight we shall see which are the people who walk in the light of God's grace, and which are those that walk in the darkness of worth."<sup>140</sup>

Arabic Idiom	Literal Meaning	English Meaning
الله يبارك فيكم	God bless you	Thanks for your blessing

This expression is used in a response to congratulations on one's marriage, passing an exam or bringing something new. Whenever the expression "Congratulations" is said, the respondent thanks the people for their congratulations.

بركة (blessing) is attached to sacred words, shrines and pious people. In particular, the highest degree of blessing is attributed to the Qur'an and the five pillars of Islam. The blessing of sacred words or passages is used frequently and for a great variety of purposes.

بسم الله (In the name of God), for instance, is the most common of all prophylactics against evil influences.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup>Abdullah Yusef Ali, trans., The Holy Qur'an, (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al Arabia, 1968), p. 15.

<sup>141</sup>Hamady, p. 167.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
الله يخزي الشيطان	God defeat the devil	May God save you from evil

This expression is used in a situation where some wrong doing is being forced on an individual or a family. In this situation, the person will have difficulty repairing what had gone wrong. They will blame the devil and seek help from God to defeat it in order to correct what was wrong.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
بعيد الشر عنك	Hope the evil is far from you	May God keep you from evil

This idiom is used in a situation where a son or daughter is feeling that some kind of harm is approaching, yet the mother is hoping that this will never happen. In this situation, the child feels that they might be getting sick, injured or be dying. The parent wishes to suppress that evil thinking and hopes that no misfortune will ever happen to the child. Whenever this phrase is used, it is intended to keep disease away from the listener. "The belief in evil eye is strong and widespread among the Arab people." In their view, "it is considered a frequent cause of misfortune such as sickness, death, or bad luck."<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup>Hamady, p. 171.



<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
بعيد من هُؤنْ	Far from here	May what happened "there" not happen here

This expression is used when people are talking about some unfortunate situation that they have just witnessed or heard about, such as a funeral or a very sick person (paralyzed or crippled). In this situation the witness wishes to others that what happened "there" will not happen to them. This idiom is usually used by parents to their children and grandparents to their children and grandchildren.

Compliments, good wishes, and laudatory expressions, however,

may attract the contrary of what they propose to say, because envy may be mixed with them. That is why a mother is not simply told that her son is handsome and healthy, or a proprietor that his house is splendid. It is feared that the son might fall sick and the house might burn.<sup>143</sup>

Consequently, a pious formula, thought to annihilate the bad magic effect of praise, accompanies the compliments mentioned above.<sup>144</sup>

#### e. Sympathy

Death is inevitable. No animate being can escape it. The Holy Qur'an affirms:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

"Every man shall taste of death."<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup>Hamady, p. 166.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid.

<sup>145</sup>The Holy Qur'an (3:185).

On another occasion it says:

أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ

Whereever you are, death will overtake you, though you remain in lofty towers.<sup>146</sup>

When death snatches away a beloved husband from his wife, an affectionate son from his parent, a loving brother from his sister and a rich person from his enormous treasure of gold and silver as well as magnificent buildings,<sup>147</sup>

it becomes natural and traditionally advised to sympathize with the injured feelings of families. The following idioms are part of many sympathy expressions used throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
البقية في حياتكم	The remainder is in your life	Sorry for the loss of your beloved

This expression is used when somebody has died. To sympathize with the members of the sad family of the deceased, people often use this idiom as a condolence term in order to share the sorrow with them. The normal response to such an expression is

حياتكم الباقية

(Hope your life remains, too).

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
العوض بسلامتكم	The compensation is in your safety	Sorry for the loss of your beloved or your belongings

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., (4:78)

<sup>147</sup>Shad, p. 133.

This expression is used in a death situation to sympathize with the family of the deceased. This idiom is also used when somebody has lost a valuable object by damage, theft or fire. In this situation, people usually sympathize with this person and hope that they will compensate that loss with health and safety. A similarly worded idiom is **اللّٰهُ يَوْضُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالسَّلَامَةِ** (God, hopefully, compensates you with your safety.) The normal response to both expressions is **اللّٰهُ يَسْتَلِّمُكُمْ** (God keeps you 'all' in peace.)

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
<b>اللّٰهُ يَرْحَمُهُ</b>	May God have mercy on him	May God forgive his sins

This expression is also used in a situation where a person has passed away and left a sad family. People offer their condolences to the sad family with considerations of respect to the broken feelings of that family.

<u>Arabic Idiom</u>	<u>Literal Meaning</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>
<b>اللّٰهُ نَقْصُ فِي عُمْرِهِ يَزِيدُ بِعُمْرِكُمْ</b>	That which is missed in his age may increase in yours	We are offering our condolences

This also is an expression of sympathy that is used in a sad situation where a beloved person has died and left a family in a calamity of sorrow. An instant inner drive of people, in such a situation, will urge to fulfill an important duty in offering their condolences and sharing that sorrow and pain with the sad family.

The analysis of Arabic idioms has shown that Arabic culture is a characteristic of social and religious conventions that are effectively used through daily patterns of thinking and doing in various situational and personal characteristics.

Several cultural values have been found to include, in general, a discussion of the natural relationship between the Arabic culture and Islam. It is apparent that social relations among the Arabs are primarily dominated by the essential spirit. It is also apparent from the frequent mention of God's name that religion and social conventions are inter-related.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary: The results of this study indicate that out of the 70 non-equivalent cultural idioms as identified by the survey of 40 English speakers who are studying advanced Arabic at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California, 16 idioms were of religious nature and 54 were of social identity.

The results of the study also indicate that all the 16 religious idioms were based on situational circumstances whereas 22 of the social idioms pertained to personal characteristics and 32 to the situational area.

The social idioms covered the aspects of Arab culture through social interaction and interpersonal relations with emphasis on friendship, worry, apprehension, and understanding of human behavior; family relations with love, affection and marriage traditions; invocation, eating and drinking habits; occupation and business; and time and politics.

The social idioms also covered a description of the Arab personal characteristics, first, through habitual behavior of stealing, prattling, flattering and adulation, and nosiness. Secondly, through the following emotional characteristics: unpleasantness, senselessness, rudeness, anger, confusion, arrogance, stubbornness, sneakiness,



haste, slowness, weakness, greed, perfectionism and appearance.

The religious idioms, however, were dominated by the Islamic values and beliefs of predestination, patience, greeting, compliment and wishing, and death and sympathy traditions.

### Conclusions:

The analysis of the 70 idiomatic expressions in the Arabic language and the discussion related to language and culture unquestionably provided historical, religious and cultural understanding of the Arab people.

The Arabic language is an expression of the Arabic culture. Arabic idioms are expressions that are culturally based in history, social customs and traditions, religion, politics and occupation. Arabic idioms, therefore, are an essential part of the language.

Since Arabic idioms originate from the historical and cultural experiences of Arab society, it became essential, therefore, for individuals learning Arabic as a foreign language to be aware of the traditions and experiences that have determined the speech patterns, in order to achieve better understanding and complete communication.

The review of the literature has shown that the need for a study of Arabic idioms with their background cultural analysis still exist. Many books and articles discuss the natural interrelationship between language and culture, of

English and Arabic idioms and their importance in language learning, and of cultural categories as seen by other researchers. Such discussions, however, referred in a rather brief and indirect way to Arabic idiomatic expressions from a cultural point of view.

This fact suggested that a study of cultural analysis of a selection of Arabic idioms as the one dealt with in this work would contribute to illuminate, even if limitedly, the need reflected in the field of education in general and teaching Arabic as a foreign language in particular.

The methodology of this descriptive analysis of study of Arabic idioms contained four steps. Initially, the Arabic cultural idioms which present difficulty to speakers of English were identified by means of a survey completed by 40 instructors of Arabic in the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center, Monterey, California. The idioms reported by the instructors were tallied and ranked. All the idioms which were reported by less than three of the instructors were deleted from the study.

Secondly, English equivalency of these idioms was obtained by means of a survey completed by 40 advanced students of the Arabic language course at the Defense Language Institute to determine which of the Arabic idioms have no equivalents in English.

In the third step of this study, the cultural categories to which these idioms belong were identified and in

the fourth the cultural information needed to understand them was determined.

The instructors reported a total of 471 idioms. Once the duplications were eliminated there remained 100 unique idioms. Of these, 24 idioms which were reported by less than three of the instructors were excluded from the study. Only six idioms were found to have English idiom equivalents, as determined by those 40 English speakers who are studying advanced Arabic at the Defense Language Institute. The seventy idioms which were found to have no English equivalent constituted the basis for the analysis.

In order to organize the discussion of the idioms they were distributed into two main categories: social and religious. The social category was further divided into situational and personal sub-categories, and all the religious idioms were based on situational circumstances.

Each of the above sub-categories then was represented by cultural aspects (values) that provided the Arabic cultural information to understand the above idioms. The social-situational sub-category was represented with the following aspects: Social interaction, interpersonal relationships and friendship, marriage and family relations, invocation, food, occupation and business, and time and politics. Two aspects represented the social-personal sub-category: habitual activity, and character description of feelings, emotions and reactions.

In the religious category, the prevalent cultural values were: predestination and fatalism, patience, greeting and salutation, compliment and wishing, and sympathy.

It was apparent, however, that most of the social practices, primarily, invocation, marriage and family relations, food, feelings and attitudes, emotions, beliefs, greetings, wishes and death customs and traditions, were heavily related to Islam. It was evident that religion and social conventions are inter-related.

Recommendations for further studies:

The problems of teaching idioms are both cultural and linguistic. By definition, there is a linguistic problem with idiomatic phrases. They don't always mean what they say. However, a learner can be taught, even by rote, to understand the proper meaning of idioms.

A more difficult problem is the cultural background of idiomatic phrases. A learner often must know the cultural setting before he or she can really understand those phrases. It is, therefore, extremely important to include cultural training as an integral part of language training. Cultural situations must be taught side by side with vocabulary and other aspects of the language.

It is difficult, however, to define the limits of this cultural training. It must certainly include sociology and the arts. Often it must be expanded to include science and technology. There is no doubt that foreign language

teachers' awareness and understanding of their own culture and the culture of the student would make this cultural training more successful.

Based on the above understanding, it is suggested that in future research there should not be a replication to this study, rather an effort to cover what it was not possible to do here. The following studies, however, are recommended:

1. A study of major Arabic newspapers to identify certain idioms that may be difficult to understand.

2. A study to record national speech patterns of Arabic in order to search for popular and heavily used idiomatic expressions.

3. To survey intermediate and continuing students of the Defense Language Institute who completed the Arabic course and lived in the Middle East for some time before returning for further studies. They might be asked which are the Arabic idioms that were found most difficult to understand while living in an Arab country.

4. A suggested study on Arabic etymology to define the idiom's word background and its cultural sources.

5. A comparison study of Syrian Arabic idiomatic expressions and Egyptian Arabic idiomatic phrases.

6. A contrastive analysis study between colloquial Arabic idioms and colloquial Arabic proverbs.

7. A study on the linguistic and cultural relations of idioms in classical Arabic in comparison to idioms of the spoken Arabic language.



## APPENDIX A

## ARABIC IDIOMS QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire has been developed as part of a study to identify a number of Arabic cultural idioms which may be difficult for speakers of English to understand.

Please list as many idioms as you can from the spoken Arabic of your own social and religious dialectal setting. Note: There is a difference in usage between Arabic proverbs ( الأمثال العربية ) and Arabic idioms ( المصطلحات العربية ): For example:

Proverb:

Idiom:

ضربني وبكى وسبقني واشتكي  
الحب أعمى

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Note 2: Please note that the emphasis in this study is on idioms, not proverbs, especially those in social or religious categories. More examples of idioms are given below:

Social Idioms

محللكم عامر  
على عيني / على راسي  
عينه حمرا  
ما في مانع

Religious Idioms

الله يطول عمرك  
رب البيت  
جبرة خاطر  
خمسة بعينك

## APPENDIX B

## Questionnaire for English Idiom

## Equivalency to Arabic

## Idioms

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the English idiom equivalency to a collection of Arabic idioms that are potentially difficult for Americans to understand. All items are based on data submitted by Arabic instructors at the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center.

Please study carefully the following Arabic Idioms and determine whether they have equivalent idioms in the English language.

On the attached answer sheets you will find all the collected Arabic idioms. You are requested to write English translations and equivalent English idioms, if any. Below is an example to assist you in performing the task. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

## EXAMPLE:

Arabic Idiom	Literal Meaning	English Meaning	English Equivalent Idiom, if any.
عَظَاكُمُ عُمُرُهُ	He gave you his age.	He died or he passed away.	He kicked the bucket.

Arabic Idiom	Literal Meaning	English Meaning	English Equivalent Idiom, if any.	R E P L Y
1. الحمد لله	Praise be to God.	Thank God it happened <u>or</u> It will not happen.	None	5
2. اسم الله عليك	The name of God upon you.	Bless you.	None	6
3.*** اشتقنا لك	We longed for you.	We missed you.	We missed you.	6
4.* أكل أصابعه ندم	He ate his fingers with regret.	He regretted something.	Excluded	2
5. أكل هوا	Eating air.	Talking nonsense.	None	6
6.* أكل العيش مر	Eating bread is bitter.	Life is difficult.	Excluded	1
7. البعد جفا	Distance makes the heart grow harder.	There is a cut-off contact between relatives or friends.	None	8
8. البقية بحياتكم	The remainder is in your life.	Sorry for the loss of your beloved.	None	8
9.*** الحيطان إلا أذان	The walls have ears.	Some people might be eavesdropping.	The walls have ears.	8
10.* الجبل عا لجرار	The rope is on the tug-boat.	This is only the beginning.	Excluded	1
11. الحديد قامة	The iron is hot.	The situation is tense.	None	8

12.	الحمد لله عالم السلامة	Praise God for your safety.	Thank God you're well and safe. - welcome back.	None	8
13.	السلام عليكم	Peace be with you.	Hello (religious term).	None	8
14.	الدهن بالعامي	The fat is in the vintage.	Showing respect and importance to elders.	Excluded	1
15.*	الصبر جميل	Patience is beautiful.	Patience is virtuous.	Excluded	2
16.	الطاس ضايع	The cup/bowl is lost.	Anarchy reigns.	None	8
17.***	الدم مار بيصيري	Blood does not become water.	Kinship is deep rooted.	Blood is thicker than water.	4
18.	العوض بسلا متكم	The compensa- tion is in your safety.	Sorry for the loss of your beloved or your belong- ings.	None	6
19.	الله يرحمه	May God have mercy on him.	May God forgive his sins.	None	6
20.	الله ينقص في عمري يزيد بعلم	That which is missed in his age may increase in yours.	Sorry for the loss of your beloved.	None	6
21.	الله يسلّمك	God protects you, too.	Thank you for your concern.	None	6
22.	الله يهديه	God gives him the right directions.	God be with him to show him the right way.	None	6
23.*	انط فالك	Butt your good omen.	Share our food, help yourself.	None	1
24.	الله يبارك فيكم	God bless You.	Thanks for your blessings.	None	6

25.	اللّٰهُ نَجِّنِي الشَّيْطَانَ	O, God, defeat the devil.	May God save you from evil.	None	6
26.	إِيْدُهُ خَفِيفَةٌ	His hand is light.	He steals (pickpocket)	None	8
27.	إِيْدُهُ طَوِيلَةٌ	His hand is long.	He steals (thief)	None	8
28.	إِجَالَيْكُمْلَا عَمَاهَا	He came to beautify the eye, instead he poked it out.	He damaged the situation.	None	7
29.	الصَّبْرُ مِفْتَاحُ الْفَرْجِ	Patience is the key to relief.	Be patient.	None	6
30.	بَالِجٌ رَّادِيُو	He is swallow- ing a radio.	He is talkative.	None	8
31.	رَاسُهُ رِيشَةٌ*	He has a feather in his head.	He's arrogant.	Excluded	2
32.	بَعِيدٌ الشَّرُّ عَنْكَ	Hope the evil is far from you.	May God keep you from evil.	None	6
33.	بَعِيدٌ مِنْ هُنَا	Far from here.	May what happened there not happen here.	None	6
34.	لَصَلْنُهُ مَحْرُوقَةٌ	His onion is burned.	Always in a hurry.	None	6
35.	بُوحَيْنِ *** فُلسَانَيْنِ	Father of two faces and two tongues.	Dissimulation.	He is two faced.	6
36.	لَمْسَحُ جَوْخِ	He wipes with a broad cloth.	Praises someone to gain his favor (flatter).	None	8
37.	تُقْعَدُ وَابَالِغِيَّةٍ	You sit with health.	Wish you a healthy stay.	None	5
38.	تَعْمُرُوا وَتُثْمَرُوا**	Live a long fruitful life.	Congratulations on your marriage.	None	5



39. تهرى ونجدد	To consume and wear again.	Congratulations on your new dress (suit).	None	5
40. ** جايين نطلب ايذبتكم	Coming to request the hand of your daughter.	Marriage proposal.	None	8
41. جبر على ورق	Ink on Paper.	Mere ink on paper.	None	5
42. خط بالخرج	Put (it) in the saddle-bag.	Drop the subject.	None	5
43. خط ايدك بمى باردة	Put your hand in cold water.	Don't worry, I will take care of it.	None	8
44. * حظاه بيفلق الصخر	His luck splits rocks.	Extremely lucky.	Excluded	1
45. حمانك بتحبك	Your mother-in-law loves you.	You arrived in the nick of time to share our meal.	None	5
46. في بيننا خبز وملح	There is bread and salt between us.	We have established unity.	None	4
47. خلقه ضيق	His manners are narrow.	Gets upset easily.	None	8
48. *** دق على الحشب	Knock on wood.	To shield against evil eye.	Knock on wood.	6
49. دمه ثقيل	His blood is heavy	He has unpleasant company.	None	8
50. دمه خفيف	He is light blooded.	Personable.	None	8
51. دمه يغلي	His blood is boiling.	He is angry.	None	7

52. ذاق الأمرين	He tasted lot's of bitterness.	He suffered a great deal.	None	3
53. راسه ناشفه	His head is dry.	Stubborn.	None	6
54.* ركبوا علينا	They rode on us.	Took advantage of us.	Excluded	1
55. روحه بمنافره	His soul/ spirit by his nostrils.	Very mad, cannot take it anymore.	None	7
56. روحك إلك	Your soul/ spirit is to you.	It is not worth it. Nothing is worth this much.	None	5
57. روحه ميتة	His spirit is dead.	Responds slowly to actions.	None	7
58.** زلاته كثيرة	He has many deficiencies.	He makes many cultural mistakes.	None	3
59. سفر تكم دايمة	May your dining table be always spread.	May God give you plenty of food so that you may always invite others.	None	5
60.** شاف حاله	He only sees himself.	He is arrogantly proud of himself.	None	7
61. مشد الرمة	Collect your strength.	Have faith in yourself.	None	4
62.* شوفه نجوم الظهر	He showed him the noon stars.	He experienced a very hard time.	Excluded	1
63.* شربة سيكارة	Duration of a cigarette smoking.	In a little while.	Excluded	1
64.* شمتان فيه	He is re-joicing at another's misfortune.	He is gloating.	Excluded	1

65.* شيخ الشباب	Shiek of the young men.	Flattering comment addressed to men where it makes the other person feel admired.	Excluded	1
66.* صابوه بالعين	"Hit" him with the eye.	To give someone the evil eye.	Excluded	1
67.* صرّ عليه دم قلبه	Spent the blood of his heart on him.	He did everything for him.	None	5
68.* صام وأفطر عبصه	He broke the fast with an onion.	He was disappointed after being very patient.	None	5
69.* ضارب طنابه	Striking his roots.	Available.	None	4
70.* طبل اجوف	Empty drum.	Empty headed, stupid.	Excluded	2
71.* طنجرة ولقيت غطاها	The pot found its cover.	Perfect match between two people.	None	4
72.* طول بالك	Lengthen your mind.	Be patient.	Excluded	2
73.* ظهره مسنود	His back is supported.	He is backed up.	None	5
74.* عاش من قلة الموت	He lives by the lack of death.	He does not deserve to live.	None	7
75.* حايث اللي خلقه	He is fed up with his creator.	He is desperate.	None	7
76.* عمرك اطول من عمري	Your age is longer than mine.	You took the words out of my mind.	None	5
77.* على عينه غشاوة	On his eye is a veil.	Can't conceive the right thing.	None	1

78. غالي والطلب رخيص	Dear, yet the request is inexpensive.	Your wish is my command.	None	4
79. فاتك نصف عمرك	You missed half of your age (life).	You missed the occasion.	None	3
80.** فاترا القطار	She missed the train.	It is too late for getting married.	She missed boat.	7
81. قلبه مَعْمِي	He is heart-blinded.	Confused, mixed up.	None	7
82. كبير بطن	His stomach is big.	He eats too much.	None	4
83.* كفه بيرعاه	His palm itches.	An omen that he is going to receive money.	Excluded	1
84.** كثير غلبه	He is troublesome.	Others can be disturbed by his continuous demands.	None	5
85. لسانه طويل	His tongue is long.	He is very talkative.	None	7
86.** ما عند ذوق	He does not have taste.	Tasteless, rude.	None	4
87. ما فيه دم	He has no blood, (bloodless).	Has no feelings towards others.	None	4
88. مقطوع من شجرة	Cut-off from a tree.	Has no help from anywhere.	None	3
89. مثل ما ودّعتموا تلاقوا	May you find him the same way you left him.	Hope you get to see him again.	None	7
90.* مخه تعبّان	His brain is tired.	He is unbalanced.	Excluded	1
91.* مش بَطَال	Not Bad.	Not too bad. Could be worse.	Excluded	1

92.*	مَنَاحِرُهُ فَوْقَ	His nose is up.	He is a snob.	Excluded	1
93.	نَشَاءُ اللَّهِ (أَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ)	God willing.	Hope it will come to be true.	None	5
94.	نَشَفَ رِيْقُهُ	His saliva dried out.	He got tired talking.	None	3
95.	هَنَّاكَمَ اللَّهُ	God makes you enjoy things.	Thank you (response).	None	3
96.	وَجْهُهُ بِجَهْلٍ الْتَرِينِ	His face scares the train.	He is very ugly.	None	3
97.*	وَيْنَ الزَّيْنِ وَوَيْنَ أَهْلِهَا	Where is the area and its people.	The distance is so far away.	Excluded	1
98.*	وَيْنَ عَقْلِهِ سَاحٍ	Where is his mind wandering.	What in the world are you thinking about.	Excluded	1
99.	يَا مَالَنَا بِالْمَطَارِ غُبَارِ	Oh, how much dust we have in battles of war.	We are experienced in this matter.	Excluded	1
100.	يَا مَا تَحْتِ السَّوَاهِي حَوَاهِي	Catastrophies are hidden under naive people.	Sneaky.	None	3

\* Repeated by less than 3 instructors and excluded from the study.

\*\* Non-idiomatic but reported by more than three instructors.

\*\*\* Equivalent idioms.

Note: Numbers on the right of each page (REPLY) indicate the number of instructors who listed the idiom.



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